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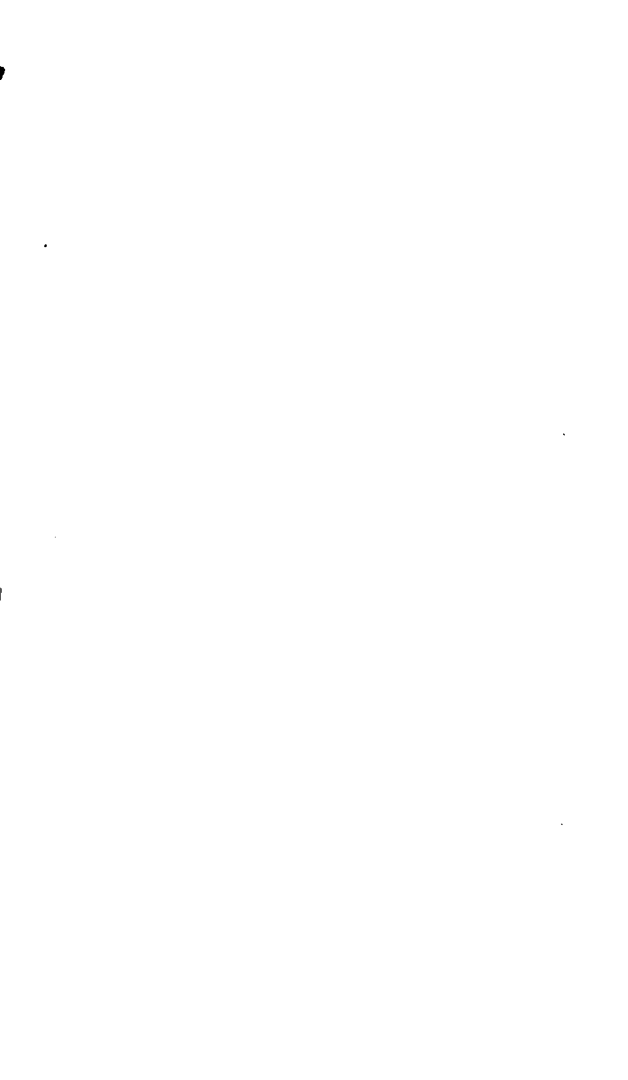
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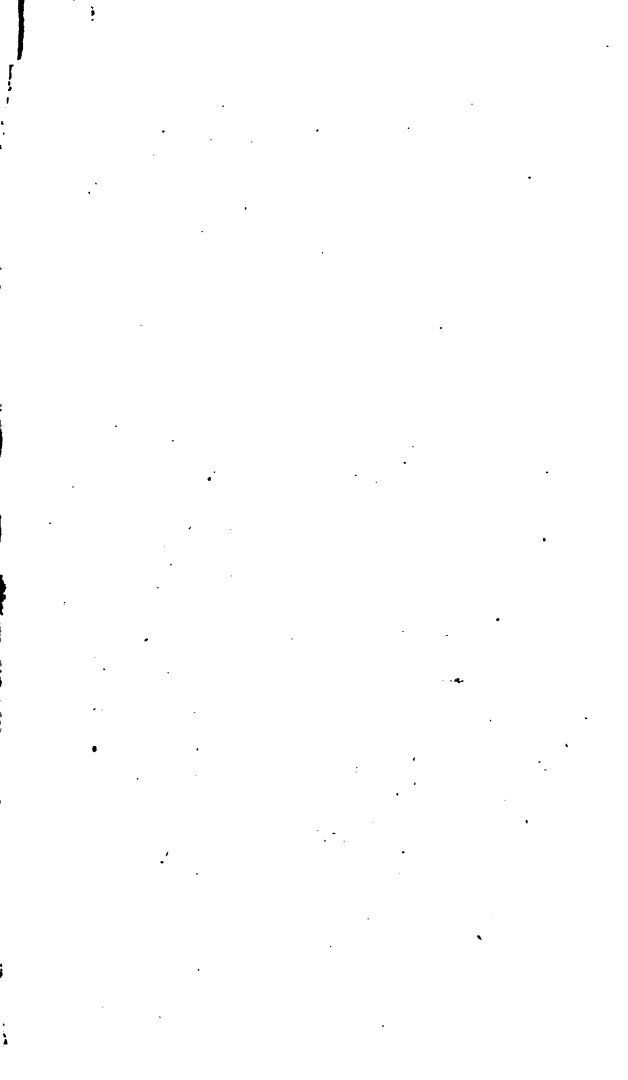
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WM COBBETT. M.P.

6.

THE LIFE OF
WILLIAM COBBETT, Esq.

LATE M. P. FOR OLDHAM.

INCLUDING
ALL THE MEMORABLE EVENTS
OF HIS
EXTRAORDINARY LIFE,
FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO THAT OF HIS DECEASE;
WITH AN
IMPARTIAL CRITIQUE ON HIS PUBLIC
CHARACTER,
AND A FULL EXPOSITION OF HIS OPINIONS ON THE VARIOUS IMPORTANT
SUBJECTS THAT ENGAGED HIS ATTENTION; THE WHOLE
BEING COMPILED FROM
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L I F E

OF

WILLIAM COBBETT, M. P.

To write the biography of an individual so eminent in all the relations of life as was the lamented subject of the present memoir, is a task beset with difficulties of no ordinary character. The extraordinary events of his career are closely connected with, and in fact belong to the history of his country. Elevated by his own mental energies, from almost the lowest grade in society, to a station of distinguished eminence, we cannot but wonder at and extol the man who, bursting resolutely through every obstacle that would have opposed and intimidated men of less intrepidity, placed himself in that exalted sphere which won for him the love and confidence of his friends, and the admiration of those, even, who were most strongly opposed to him in political opinions. Some few, indeed, have dared to accuse him of political inconsistency—of deserting the Tory party to espouse the cause of their most violent opponents, and of having, in fact, written, during the latter period of his life, to contradict and falsify the opinions he had formed in his less mature age. But let such persons attentively consider the different positions in which Mr. Cobbett has thus found himself placed. In youth and early manhood he was a Tory, for the self same reason that he afterwards became a stern and uncompromising Radical Reformer—a veneration for his country, and an ardent desire to see her constitution preserved from the wicked designs of those who would have destroyed, while they affected to improve it. He saw the encroachments that had been already made on the liberties of Englishmen, and perceived with a keen eye that the

whole fabric was doomed to fall beneath the insidious attacks of those who professed to be its conservators. His pen was now wielded in the cause that, as a patriot, was dearest to his heart;—he attacked, with unsparing hand, those whom he had formerly supported as friends;—he converted them to deadly foes, and was thenceforward an object of hatred, who was to be crushed as soon as the first convenient opportunity presented itself. But a true lover of his country is not to be intimidated by personal danger, and we accordingly find Mr. Cobbett pursuing his bold course with vigour and manliness. Persecution followed, and punishment, by fine and imprisonment—succeeded, yet all this he endured with a degree of resignation that is truly admirable. His spirit remained unbroken by oppression; he saw that his enemies were standing upon untenable ground, and that by perseverance he should yet be able to overcome them. With this object in view, he continued to harass and hold them up to public scorn; they quailed like cowards, and endeavoured to protect themselves through the agency of *ex officio* informations!—The results, however, remain to be told in our succeeding pages; we have mentioned the fact merely to convince those of our younger readers who knew not his real character, that William Cobbett deserves not the designation of turn-coat;—that he did change his political opinions once, is true, but he clung to those which he afterwards adopted, with a tenacity and firmness of purpose, that must convince even his aspersers, that, in a righteous cause, he could be, and was a resolute and most efficient champion.

William Cobbett was born in the neighbourhood of Farnham, Surrey, on the 9th of March, 1762. His paternal grandfather was a day-labourer, whose honesty and industry may be inferred from the fact of his having been employed by one master, from the day of his marriage to that of his death,—a period of more than forty years. The father of William Cobbett was a small farmer, who, though he had received but a very moderate education, was a man of very powerful natural abilities. When a little boy, he worked at plough for two-pence a day, and trifling as his earnings were, he appropriated them to the expense of an evening school. What a village school-

master could be expected to teach, he had learnt, and had besides considerably advanced himself in several branches of mathematics. He understood land-surveying, and was often chosen to draw the plans of disputed territories; in short he had the reputation of possessing experience and understanding, which never fails to give a man in a country place some little weight with his neighbours. He was honest, industrious, and frugal, and it was not, therefore, extraordinary, that he should be situated in a good farm, and happy in a wife of his own rank, like him beloved and respected. The issue of this worthy couple was four sons, George, Thomas, WILLIAM, and Anthony, who, as appears by the register of Farnham parish, were christened at one time, April 1, 1763.

The house in which he was born is close beside the river Wey, and immediately opposite the bridge which passes over that little stream; it is at present known by the sign of "The Jolly Farmer," and is now kept by one John Hoole. The house is at this period (July 1835) undergoing an extensive repair and alteration; the recent removal of a partition has changed the situation of Cobbett's room, which was the back parlour of the house, but now forms a portion of the front one. To this room, Cobbett, when he called in after life, was wont to go; and, as he brought friend after friend to see the place "where he breathed his first," he would exclaim, striking the cupboard, in the extreme corner, "here was my hutch, and here I used to keep my rabbits." Cobbett's father had a house, subsequently, next door to the "Jolly Farmer;" his death was occasioned by falling down stairs in a fit.

It may readily be supposed that the children of such parents were not suffered to eat the bread of idleness, and we accordingly find that the subject of our present memoir was employed at a very early age in driving the small birds from the turnip seed, and the rooks from the peas. When he first trudged out on this errand, with his wooden bottle and satchel swung over his shoulders, he was hardly able to climb the gates and stiles, and, at the close of the day, to reach home, was a task of infinite difficulty. His next employment was woeing wheat, and leading a single horse at harrowing barley. Hoeing

peas followed, and hence he arrived at the honour; (to use his own words) of joining the reapers at harvest, driving the team, and holding the plough. William and his brothers were strong and laborious, and their father used to boast with honest pride, that the eldest boy, who was then but fifteen, did as much work as any three men in the parish of Farnham.

In the winter evenings the father taught the youths to read and write, but not being a good grammarian himself, he necessarily failed in making them masters of grammar; he, however, made them get the rules by heart, but as they learnt nothing at all of the principles, the object was never gained.

As to politics, this happy family neither knew nor thought anything about the matter. The shouts of victory, or the murmurs of a defeat, would, indeed, now and then break in upon their tranquillity, but as they never saw a newspaper, there was of course no excitement to pursue their inquiries on that mazy subject. After the American war, however, had continued for some time, and the cause and nature of it began to be understood among the lower classes of the people in England, they became a little more acquainted with subjects of this kind. It is well known that the people were, as to numbers, nearly equally divided in their opinions concerning that war, and their wishes respecting the result of it. The elder Cobbett was a partizan of the Americans, and used frequently to dispute on the subject with the gardener of a nobleman who lived near. This was generally done with good humour, over a mug of ale, yet the disputants sometimes grew warm and obstinate. The elder Cobbett was usually worsted in these wordy conflicts, as he had for his antagonist a shrewd and sensible old Scotchman, far his superior in political knowledge; but he pleaded before a partial audience, his own children, who thought there was but one wise man in the world, and that that one was their father. He who pleaded the cause of the Americans had an advantage, too, with young minds, he had only to represent the King's troops as sent to cut the throats of a people, or friends and relations, merely because they would not submit to oppression, and his cause was gained.

Men of integrity are generally very obstinate in adhering to an opinion once adopted. Whether it was owing to this, or to the weakness of his adversary's arguments, we cannot say; but he never could make a convert of Mr. Cobbett; he continued to uphold the cause of the Americans, and so staunch was he that he would not have suffered his best friend to drink success to the King's arms at his table. We cannot give a better idea of his obstinacy in this respect, and of the length to which this difference of sentiment was carried in England, than by relating the following instance.

The worthy farmer used to take one of his sons with him every year to the hop fair at Weyhill. The fair was held at Old Michaelmas-tide, and the journey was, to the boys, a sort of reward for the labours of the summer. It happened to be William Cobbett's turn to go there the very year that Long Island was taken by the British. A large party of hop merchants and farmers were just sitting down to supper, as the post arrived, bringing in the Extraordinary Gazette which announced the victory. A hop factor from London took the paper, placed his chair upon the table, and began to read aloud. He was opposed: a dispute ensued, and Mr. Cobbett retired, taking with him his son, William, to another apartment, where they supped with about a dozen others of the same sentiments. Here Washington's health, and success to the Americans, were repeatedly toasted; this was the first time that ever the subject of our memoir heard the name of that truly patriotic general.

Speaking of this circumstance, Mr. Cobbett says: "Let not the reader imagine that I wish to assume any merit from this mistaken prejudice of an honoured and beloved parent. Whether he was right or wrong, is not now worth talking about. That I had no opinion of my own is certain; for had my father been on the other side, I should have been on the other side too, and should have looked upon the company I then made a part of, as malcontents and rebels, I mention these circumstances merely to show, that I was not nursed in the lap of aristocracy, and that I did not imbibe my principles, or prejudices, from those who were the advocates of blind submission. If my father had any fault, it was not being submissive enough, and I

am much afraid, my acquaintances have but too often discovered the same fault in his son."

It would be useless to dwell any longer on the occupations and sports of a country boy; to lead the reader to fairs, cricket-matches, and hare hunts. We will therefore come at once to the epoch, when an accident happened, which gave that turn to Mr. Cobbett's future life, that at last took him to the United States. This event, which is described by him with much graphic force, is thus related in his life, published by him in Philadelphia, 1796.

"Towards the autumn of 1782," says Mr. Cobbett, "I went to visit a relation who lived in the neighbourhood of Portsmouth. From the top of Portsdown, I, for the first time, beheld the sea; and no sooner did I behold it, than I wished to be a sailor. I could never account for this sudden impulse; nor can I now; almost all English boys feel the same inclination: it would seem, that, like young ducks, instinct leads them to rush on the bosom of the water.

"But it was not the sea alone that I saw; the grand fleet was riding at anchor at Spithead. I had heard of the wooden walls of England, I had formed my ideas of a ship, and of a fleet; but, what I now beheld so far surpassed what I had ever been able to form a conception of, that I stood lost between astonishment and admiration. I had heard talk of the glorious deeds of our admirals and sailors, of the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and of all those memorable combats that good and true Englishmen never fail to relate to their children about a hundred times a year. The brave Rodney's victories had long been the theme of our praise and the burden of our songs. The sight of the fleet brought all these into my mind; in confused order, it is true, but with irresistible force. My heart was inflated with national pride. The sailors were my countrymen; the fleet belonged to my country, and surely I had my part in it, and in all its honours; yet these honours I had not earned; I took to myself a sort of reproach, for possessing what I had no right to, and resolved to have a just claim by sharing in the hardships and dangers.

"I arrived at my uncle's late in the evening, with my mind full of my seafaring project. Though I had walked

thirty miles during the day, and consequently was well wearied, I slept not a moment. It was no sooner daylight, than I arose and walked down towards the old castle on the beach of Spithead. For a sixpence given to an invalid, I got permission to go upon the battlements; here I had a closer view of the fleet, and at every look my impatience to be on board increased. In short, I went from the castle to Portsmouth, got into a boat, and was in a few minutes on board the Pegasus man-of-war.

"The captain had more compassion than is generally met with in men of his profession; he represented to me the toils I must undergo, and the punishment that the least disobedience or neglect would subject me to. He persuaded me to return home, and I remember he concluded his advice by telling me, that it was better to be led to the church in a halter, to be tied to a girl that I did not like, than to be tied to the gangway, or, as the sailors call it, married to *Miss Roper*. From the conclusion of this wholesome counsel I perceived that the captain thought I had eloped on account of a bastard. I blushed, and that confirmed him in his opinion; but I declare to the reader, that I was no more guilty of that offence, than Mr. Swanwick, (*an American with whom he was at variance*) or any other gentleman who is constitutionally virtuous.

"I in vain attempted to convince Captain Berkeley that choice alone had led me to the sea; he sent me on shore, and I at last quitted Portsmouth: but not before I had applied to the Port Admiral, Evans, to get my name enrolled among those who were destined for the service. I was in some sort obliged to acquaint the admiral with what had passed on board the Pegasus, in consequence of which my request was refused, and I happily escaped, sorely against my will, from the most toilsome and perilous profession in the world."

After this unsuccessful application, young Cobbett once more returned to the plough, but was completely spoiled for a farmer. He had, previous to his Portsmouth adventure, never known any other ambition than that of surpassing his brothers in the different labours of the field; but it was quite otherwise now; he sighed for a sight of the world, and the little island of Britain, seemed of too small a compass for him. The things in which he

had formerly taken the most delight were now neglected ; the singing of the birds grew insipid, and even the heart-cheering cry of the hounds, after which he had been used to fly from his work, bound o'er the fields, and dash through the brakes and coppices, was heard with the most torpid indifference. Still, however, he remained at home till the following spring, when he quitted it, as he believed, for ever.

It was on the sixth of May 1783, that he, Don Quixotte-like, sallied forth to seek adventures. He was dressed in his holiday clothes, in order to accompany two or three lasses to Guildford fair. They were to assemble at a house about three miles from his home, where he was to attend them, but, unfortunately for his gallantry, he had to cross the London turnpike-road. The stage-coach had just turned the summit of a hill, and was rattling down towards him at a merry rate. The notion of going to London had never entered his mind till this moment, yet the step was completely determined on before the coach came to the spot where he stood. He jumped up, and found himself in London about nine o'clock the same evening.

Mr. Cobbett, himself, confesses that it was by mere accident he had money enough with him to defray the expenses of that day. Being rigged out for the fair, he had three or four crown and half-crown pieces, besides a few shillings and some halfpence. This, his little all, which he had been years in amassing, melted away like snow before the sun, when touched by the inn-keepers and their waiters. In short, when he arrived at Ludgate Hill, where the coach stopped, and had paid his fare, he had but about half a crown left in his pocket.

By a commencement of that good luck which generally attended him through all the situations in which fortune had placed him, our young adventurer was happily preserved from ruin. A gentleman, who was one of the passengers in the stage, fell into conversation with him at dinner, and soon learnt that he was going he knew not whither, nor for what purpose. This gentleman was a hop merchant in the borough of Southwark, and, upon closer inquiry it appeared that he had often dealt with the elder Mr. Cobbett, at Weyhill. He saw the danger the young man was in; he was himself a father, and he felt for the

parents of his newly found protégé. His house became the home of the wandering youth; he wrote to his father, and endeavoured to prevail upon the son to return home immediately. Our hero, however, was resolute; he would willingly have returned, but pride would not suffer him to do it. He feared the scoffs of his acquaintances more than the real evils that threatened him.

The gentleman, finding the obstinacy of the run-away not to be overcome, then began to look out for an employment for him. He was preparing an advertisement for the newspaper, when an acquaintance of his, an attorney, called in to see him. He related the adventures of the young man to this gentleman, whose name was Holland, and who, happening to want a copying clerk, did William Cobbett the honour to take him into his service, and the next day saw him perched upon a great high stool, in an obscure chamber in Gray's Inn, endeavouring to decipher the crabbed draughts of his employer.

Though young Cobbett could himself write a good plain hand, he found it impossible to read the pot-hooks and bangers of Mr. Holland, who, consequently, was a month in learning him to copy, without almost continual assistance, and even then his new clerk was of but little use to him, for, besides writing very slowly, his want of knowledge in orthography, gave him infinite trouble; so that for the first two months, Cobbett was a dead weight upon his master's hands. Time, however, rendered him useful, and Mr. Holland was pleased to say that he was very well satisfied with his clerk, just at the precise period when the latter began to grow extremely dissatisfied with his employer.

The eight or nine months that young Cobbett passed here, were heavy and wearisome enough. The office, (for so the dungeon where he wrote was called,) was so dark, that on cloudy days they were obliged to burn candles. He worked like a galley slave from five in the morning till eight or nine at night, and sometimes all night long. From this gloomy recess he never escaped but on Sundays, when he usually took a walk to St. James's Park, to feast his eyes with the sight of the trees, the grass, and the water. In one of his walks he happened to cast his eyes on an advertisement, or placard, inviting all loyal young men,

who had a mind to gain riches and glory, to repair to a certain rendezvous, where they might enter into His Majesty's marine service, and have the peculiar happiness and honour of being enrolled in the Chatham Division. Young Cobbett was not simple enough to be the dupe of this morsel of military bombast, but a change was what he wanted; besides, he knew that marines went to sea, and his desire to be on that element had rather increased than diminished by being penned up in London. In short, he resolved to join this glorious corps; and, to avoid all possibility of being discovered, went down to Chatham, and enlisted, as he imagined, into the marines, but the next morning found himself before a captain of a marching regiment! There was now no retreating, he had taken a shilling to drink the King's health, and still further bounty was ready for his reception.

When Cobbett told the captain (an Irishman and afterwards an excellent friend to him) that he had believed himself to be enlisted in the marines: "By Jasus! my lad," said he, "and you have had a narrow escape." He then told his recruit that the regiment into which he had been so happy as to enlist, was one of the oldest and boldest in the whole army, and that it was at that moment serving in that fine, flourishing, and plentiful country, Nova Scotia. He dwelt long on the beauties and riches of this terrestrial paradise, and dismissed the young man, perfectly enchanted with the prospect of a voyage thither.

Mr Cobbett enlisted early in the year 1784, and, as peace had then taken place, no great haste was made to send off the recruits to their regiments. He remained upwards of a year at Chatham, during which time he was employed in learning the exercise, and taking his turn in the duty of the garrison. His leisure time, which was a very considerable portion of the twenty-four hours, was spent, not in the dissipations common to such a way of life, but in reading and study. In the course of this year he learnt more than he had ever done before. He subscribed to a circulating library at Brompton, the greatest part of the books in which he read more than once over. The library, it is true, was not very considerable, nor in his reading was he directed by any degree of taste or choice.

Novels, plays, history, poetry,—all were read, and nearly with equal avidity.

Such a course of reading could be attended with but little profit; it was skimming over the surface of everything. One branch of learning, however, he went to the bottom with, and that the most essential branch too—the grammar of his mother tongue. He had experienced the want of a knowledge of grammar during his stay with Mr. Holland; but it is very probable he never would have thought of studying it, had not accident placed him under a man whose friendship extended beyond his interest. Writing a fair hand procured him the honour of being copyist to Colonel Debeig, the commandant of the garrison. He transcribed the famous correspondence between that officer and the Duke of Richmond, which ended in the good and gallant old colonel being stripped of the reward bestowed on him for his long and meritorious servitude.

Being totally ignorant of the rules of grammar, the scribe naturally made many mistakes in copying. The colonel saw his deficiency, and strongly recommended study, in fact, he enforced his advice with a sort of injunction, and a promise of reward in case of successful application.

Cobbett then procured Lowth's Grammar, and set himself to the study of it with unceasing assiduity, and not without a fair share of profit; for, though it was a considerable time before he full comprehended all that he read, still he read and studied with such unremitting attention that, at last, he could write without falling into any very gross errors. The trouble he took was very great; he wrote the whole grammar out two or three times; got it by heart, repeated it every morning and evening, and, when on guard, imposed upon himself the task of saying it all over once every time he was posted sentinel. To this exercise of his memory may be ascribed the retentiveness of which it was subsequently found capable, and to the success with which it was attended, may be attributed the perseverance that afterwards, led to the profound knowledge he attained.

This study, too, was attended with another advantage—it kept him out of mischief. He was always sober, and

regular in his attendance; and, not being a clumsy fellow, met with none of those reproofs which disgust so many young men with the service.

There is no situation where merit is so sure to meet with reward as in a well disciplined army. Those who command are obliged to reward it for their own ease and credit. Cobbett was soon raised to the rank of corporal; a rank, which, however contemptible it may appear in some people's eyes, brought him a clear two-pence a day, and put a very smart worsted knot upon his shoulder.

As promotion began to dawn, our youthful hero grew impatient to get to his regiment, where he expected soon to bask under the rays of royal favour. The happy day of departure at last came; they set sail for Gravesend, and, after a short and pleasant passage, arrived at Halifax, in Nova Scotia. When Cobbett first beheld the barren not to say hideous, rocks at the entrance of the harbour, he began to fear that the master of the vessel had mistaken his way, for nothing could he perceive of that fertility which his recruiting captain had dwelt on with so much delight.

Nova Scotia had no other charm for our young soldier than that of novelty. Every thing he saw was new; bogs, rocks, and stumps, musquitoes, and bull-frogs. Thousands of captains and colonels without soldiers, and of squires without stockings or shoes. In England, as a rustic boy, he had never thought of approaching a squire without a most respectful bow; but, in this new world, though he was but a corporal, he often ordered a squire to bring him a glass of grog, and even to take care of his knapsack!

They staid but a few weeks at Nova Scotia, being ordered to St. John's, in the province of New Brunswick. Here, and at other places in the same province, they remained till the month of September, 1791, when the regiment was relieved and sent home, after having been absent from England for a period of about six years.

The Province of New Brunswick, in North America, consists, in general of heaps of rocks; in the interstices of which grow the pine, the spruce, and various sorts of fir trees, or, when the woods have been burnt down, the bushes of the raspberry or those of the huckleberry. The province is cut asunder, lengthwise, by a great river called

the St. John, about 200 miles in length, and, at half way from the mouth, full a mile in width. Into this main river run innumerable smaller ones, there called *creeks*. On the sides of these creeks the land is, in places, clear of rocks, and is generally good and productive; the trees that grow here are the birch, the maple, and others of the deciduous class; natural meadows here and there present themselves, and some of these spots far surpass in rural beauty, those to be found in more cultivated districts; the creeks, abounding towards their sources in water falls of endless variety, as well in form as in magnitude, and always teeming with fish, while water-fowl enliven their surface, and wild pigeons, of the gayest plumage, flutter in thousands upon thousands, amongst the branches of the beautiful trees, which sometimes, for miles together, form an arch over the creeks.

It was during his residence at this place that Mr. Cobbett met with that excellent female who, as his wife, has passed with him through so many of those severe ordeals that he was subsequently doomed to endure. When he first saw her she was but thirteen years old, while he was within a month of twenty-one. She was the daughter of a serjeant-major of artillery, and he the serjeant-major of a regiment of foot, both stationed in forts near the city of St. John. He sat in the same room with her, for about an hour, in company with others, and made up his mind at once that she was the very girl for him. She was beautiful, and he perceived in her, what he deemed, marks of that sobriety of conduct which was afterwards the greatest blessing of his life. It was then dead of winter, the snow several feet deep on the ground, and the weather piercing cold. It was his habit, when he had done his morning's writing, to go out at break of day to take a walk on a hill at the foot of which their barracks lay. In about three mornings after he had first seen her, he had, by an invitation to breakfast with him, got up two young men to join him in his walk, and their road lay by the house of the father and mother of his fair innamorata. It was hardly light, but she was out on the snow, scrubbling out a washing tub. "That's the girl for me," exclaimed Cobbett, as soon as they had got out of her hearing, and subsequent events have proved the prudence of his sudden determination.

At the end of about six months, the regiment to which Cobbett belonged, was removed to Frederickton, a distance of about a hundred miles up the river St. John, and what was worse to the lover, the artillery were expected to go off to England a year or two before his own regiment. The artillery did go, and she along with them; and then it was that he acted the part becoming an honourable and sensible man. He was aware that when she got to Woolwich, the house of her father and mother, necessarily visited by numerous persons, not the most select, might become unpleasant to her, and he did not like the idea that she should continue to work hard. He had saved *one hundred and fifty guineas*, the earnings of his early hours, in writing for the paymaster, the quartermaster, and others, in addition to the savings of his own pay. *He sent her all his money*, before she sailed, and wrote to beg of her, if she found her home uncomfortable to hire a lodging with respectable people, and not to spare the money, but to buy herself good clothes, and live without hard work until he returned to England; and, in order to induce her to lay out the money, told her he should get plenty more before he came home. She went, but circumstances kept her lover two years longer in New Brunswick.

During this separation Cobbett remained true and unchanged towards her to whom he had thus given his heart, but a circumstance soon occurred that, had he not been a man superior in honour to most others, would infallibly have embittered the remainder of his life. Chance threw him into the society of another female, young, beautiful, and virtuous; he felt the force of these combined charms, but shaking off the fetters that love had nearly entwined round his heart, he resolved that no consideration should induce him to blast the enduring affection of her whom he had already vowed to wed. The occurrence to which we allude is as follows:—

In one of his rambles in the woods of New Brunswick, he chanced to reach a spot at a very short distance from the source of one of those creeks to which we have before alluded. Here was every thing to delight the eye, and especially of one like him, who seems to have been born to love rural life in its simplest and most natural form.

Here were about two hundred acres of rich meadow land, interspersed with patches of maple trees in various forms, and of various extent; indeed, if Nature, in her very best humour had made a spot for the express purpose of captivating him, she could not have exceeded the efforts she had made there.

In the midst of this beautiful spot he found a large and well-built log dwelling-house, standing (in the month of September) on the edge of a very good field of Indian corn, by the side of which there was a piece of buckwheat just then mowed. Partly from misinformation, and partly from miscalculation, the young soldier had lost his way; and, quite alone, but armed with his sword and a brace of pistols, to defend himself against the bears, he arrived at the log house in the middle of a moonlight night. A stout and clamorous dog waked the master of the house, who got up, received him with great hospitality, gave him some of his best fare, and finally insisted on his sleeping there that night.

In the morning, when he arose, he found the breakfast table loaded with all sorts of good things. Here he met, among the other members of the family, the daughter, a beautiful girl about nineteen years of age, who, (dressed according to the neat and simple fashion of New England, whence she had come with her parents five or six years before) had her long light-brown hair twisted nicely up, and fastened on the top of her head, in which head were a pair of lovely blue eyes, associated with features of which that softness and that sweetness, so characteristic of American girls, were the predominant expressions; the whole being set off by a complexion of glowing health, and forming, figure, movements, and all taken together an assemblage of beauties, far surpassing any that he had ever seen but *once* in his life,—and she, the object of his first passion was now in a far distant land.

Here then was the *present* against the *absent*; here was the power of the *eyes* against that of the *memory*, here were all the senses up in arms to subdue the influence of the thoughts; here, in fact, was every thing that imagination can conceive, united in a conspiracy against the poor little brunette in England! What, then,—did he fall in love at once with this new found beauty?—No,—but he

was so enchanted with *the place*; he so much enjoyed its tranquillity, the shade of the maple trees, the business of the farm, the sports of the water, and of the woods, that he stayed there to the last possible minute, promising at his departure to visit them as often as he possibly could;—a promise which he most punctually fulfilled.

It is when you meet in company with others of your own age, that you are, in love matters, put most frequently to the test. The next neighbour might, in that country, be ten miles off. They used to meet sometimes at one house and sometimes at another. Here,—where female eyes are very much on the alert,—no secret can long be kept; and very soon father, mother, brother, and the whole neighbourhood looked upon the match as certain, not excepting the girl herself, to whom, however, Cobbett had never once even talked of marriage, or hinted at such a word as *love*. But he had a thousand times done these things by implication, taking into view the interpretation she would naturally put upon his looks, words, and actions. Yet he was no deceiver, for his affection towards her was very great; he spent no really pleasant hours but with her; he was uneasy if she showed the slightest regard for any other young man; he was unhappy if she was affected in health or spirits; he quitted her with dejection, and returned to her with eager delight. This, if not love, was at least first cousin to it, and he would frequently put to himself the question: “What am I at?” “Is not this wrong?” “Why do I go?”—But still he went.

At last the hour of their final parting came, for the regiment to which Cobbett belonged was at length ordered to return to England. To describe this parting would be impossible. The kind and excellent father travelled the distance of forty miles to see the young serjeant-major just as he was going on board in the river. His looks and words were expressive of the deep anguish he felt. As the vessel descended, she passed the mouth of *that creek* which the subject of our memoir had so often entered with delight; and though England, and all that England contained were before him, he lost sight of this creek with an aching heart!

On what trifles turn the great events in the life of man! If he had received a cool letter from his intended wife;

if he had only heard a rumour of any thing from which fickleness in her might have been inferred; if he had found in her any, even the smallest abatement of affection, if she had, but let go any one of the hundred strings by which she held his heart; if any one of these things had happened, he would have settled for life in that wild solitude, and the world would never have heard the name of William Cobbett.

But to return to our narrative;—the troops landed at Portsmouth on the 3rd of November, and on the 19th of the next month he obtained his discharge, after having served not quite eight years, during which short space of time he passed through every rank, from that of a private sentinel to that of serjeant-major, without ever being once disgraced, confined, or even reprimanded, but let his superiors attest for his conduct during these years of his servitude; the following is the testimonial of Lord Edward Fitzgerald who commanded the regiment:—

“By the Right Honourable, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, commanding the 54th regiment, of which Lieutenant General Frederick is Colonel.—

“These are to certify, that the bearer hereof, William Cobbett, serjeant-major in the aforesaid regiment, has served honestly and faithfully for the space of eight years, nearly seven of which he has been a non-commissioned officer, and of that time he has been five years serjeant-major to the regiment; but, having very earnestly applied for his discharge, he, in consideration of his good behaviour and the services he has rendered the regiment, is hereby discharged.

“Given under my hand, and the seal of the regiment, at Portsmouth, this 19th day of December, 1791.

“EDWARD FITZGERALD.”

To this we will add the Orders issued in the garrison of Portsmouth on the day of his discharge:—

“*Portsmouth, 19th Dec. 1791.*

“Serjeant-major Cobbett having most pressing applied for his discharge, at Major Lord Edward Fitzgerald’s request, General Frederick has granted it. General Frederick has ordered Major Lord Edward Fitzgerald to

return the serjeant-major thanks for his behaviour and conduct during the time he has been in the regiment; and Major Lord Edward adds his most hearty thanks to those of the General."

Having thus obtained his discharge from military service, Mr. Cobbett's first thought was to visit Woolwich in search of her whom he had chosen to be the future partner of his life and fortunes. He found that she had engaged herself as servant of all work, at five pounds a year wages, in the house of a Captain Brisac, and following her thither he had the happiness of meeting with her once more after a separation of four long years. The event was of course gratifying in the extreme to both parties, but who can describe the astonishment and admiration of the young lover, when that excellent girl put into his hands the whole of the hundred and fifty pounds which he had given for her own use just previous to her departure from New Brunswick. He at once perceived that, in addition to all her other eminent virtues, she was possessed of prudence and discretion in an extraordinary degree, and anxious to release her from the state of drudgery in which he found her, he pressed his suit so earnestly, that within three months afterwards they were united. According to the register in Woolwich church, their marriage took place on the 5th of February 1792.

Now, when we consider the age of this girl (the widow of Mr. Cobbett); when we reflect that she was living in a place crowded with gaily dressed and handsome young men,—many of whom were far richer and in higher rank than her far absent lover,—who were ready to offer her their hand; when we reflect that she was living among young women who spent, in articles of dress and finery, every shilling they could get; when we see her keeping the bag of gold untouched, and working hard to provide herself with but more necessary apparel, and doing this while she was passing from fourteen to eighteen years of age; when we view the whole of the circumstances, we must say that here is an example, which, while it reflects honour on her sex, ought to have weight with every young woman whose eyes or ears this relation shall reach.

The next important incident in the life of Mr. Cobbett, was, his obtaining a Court Martial against four officers o

the 54th regiment, on a charge of embezzlement of stores and false returns. This was shortly after he had obtained his discharge. He required and obtained that the Court Martial should be held in London, and wrote to the authorities in the following words;—"If my accusation is without foundation, the authors of cruelty have not yet devised the tortures I ought to endure. Hell itself, as painted by the most fiery bigot, would be too mild a punishment for me."

The Court was held at the Horse Guards, on the 24th of March 1792; but Mr. Cobbett did not appear. It was adjourned to the 27th to make inquiries after him; but still no accuser came forward, or was to be found. The Court then examined such persons as had been subpoenaed as witnesses, and judged;—"that the said several charges against those officers respectively are, and every part thereof is, totally unfounded, and the Court does therefore most honourably acquit the said Captain Richard Powell, Lieutenant Christopher Seaton, and Lieutenant John Hall of the same." The fourth officer, a Lieutenant-colonel, had died before the case was investigated.

This apparently strange conduct of Mr. Cobbett, has never been thoroughly cleared up, but it has been asserted that he found a host of intrigue working against him to falsify the charges he had brought against these officers—his witnesses had been bribed to keep out of the way, and all his material evidence being thus suppressed, he hastily left England for France. There he remained for six months, when finding that, in consequence of the revolutionary movements in that country, a war with England was inevitable, he at once foresaw what would be the fate of Englishmen in that unhappy kingdom, where the rulers had laid aside even the appearance of justice and mercy. He wished, however, to see Paris, and had actually hired a conveyance to go thither; nay, was even on the way to the capital, when he heard at Abbeville that the King was dethroned, and his guards murdered. This intelligence made him turn off toward Havre de Grace, whence he embarked for America.

At this time, the latter end of the year 1792, party feeling ran high, and was indulged in with great bitterness, in America. The French, or democratic party were

fierce in their abuse of England and her institutions. This Cobbett could not bear. The love of his country was with him not merely a settled feeling—it partook of the ardour of a passion; and it will be found, upon a careful perusal of his writings, that this feeling continued unabated throughout his long life, and ever influenced his pen and his tongue.

In Philadelphia, where his wife soon afterwards joined him, he commenced his public career by espousing the cause of England in a series of pamphlets, under the assumed name of Peter Porcupine which soon excited much attention even in this country, where some of them were re-printed. The first of these pamphlets was “The Tartuffe Detected; or Observations on the Emigration of a Martyr to the Cause of Liberty,”—meaning Dr. Rush, who, as we shall see, subsequently prosecuted the author for a libel, and obtained heavy damages. As this was the commencement of a literary career unexampled, taken altogether, in the republic of letters, and was in itself moreover, of rather a curious description, we shall give Mr. Cobbett's own account of it. There was great difficulty, it seems in obtaining a publisher for this work, in consequence of its unpopular character, and it was not until after the title was altered, by the suppression of the first part of it, that the author could succeed in bringing it before the public. It was then taken by a bookseller, and the author shall relate his own story:—

“The terms on which Mr. Bradford took the “Observations,” were what booksellers call, publishing it together. I beg the reader, if he foresees the possibility of his becoming author, to recollect this phrase well. Publishing it together is thus managed; the bookseller takes the work, prints it, and defrays all expenses of paper, binding, &c. and the profits, if any, are divided between him and the author. Long after the “Observations” were sold off, Mr. Bradford rendered me an account (undoubtedly a very just one) of the sales. According to his account, my share of the profits (my share only) amounted to the sum of one shilling and seven pence halfpenny currency of the State of Pennsylvania (or, about eleven-pence three farthings sterling,) quite entirely clear of all deductions whatever.”

A hopeful beginning for a young author, who had committed himself to the championship of a great cause, and who had made choice of literature as a profession for his existence! After the "Observation," however, Mr. Cobbett and Mr. Bradford "published together" no longer. The Author bargained for each of his subsequent pamphlets, until he turned publisher himself, and thus secured the lion's share as well as his own. The titles of the pamphlets which he produced are singular for their quaintness; such as; "A Kick for a Bite;—" *The Rush-Light*;" "The Scare Crow"—"The Bloody Buoy," &c. By all these, though directed against the patriots of America, he obtained great celebrity, and Thomas Paine, whom he had violently attacked, complimented him by saying that "Porcupine was the only one of his party who had any brains."

In spite of the difficulties, however, which he had to endure, his domestic life seems to have been one of uninterrupted happiness. He himself, was a most considerate and excellent husband, and his wife was blessed with all those amiable qualities that ensure a permanent felicity to the married life. An instance of his unwearying assiduity to add to her comfort in the hour of woman's severest trial, is afforded in the following incident. At the period of the birth of their first child, which happened in the middle of the burning hot month of July, he was greatly afraid of fatal consequences to his wife for want of sleep, she not having, after the great danger was over, had any sleep for more than forty-eight hours. All large cities in hot countries are full of dogs; and they, in the very hot weather, keep up during the night, a horrible barking and fighting and howling. Upon the particular occasion to which we allude, they made a noise so terrible and so unremitted that it was next to impossible that even a person in full health and free from pain should obtain even a minute's sleep. In the evening she felt disposed to slumber and expressed her opinion that she could get some rest if it were not for the dogs. Down stairs went the considerate husband, and out he sallied, in his shirt and trowsers, and without shoes or stockings, and going to a heap of stones lying beside the road, set to work upon the dogs, walking backwards and forwards, and

keeping them at two or three hundred yards distance from the house. He walked thus the whole night, bare-footed, lest the noise of his shoes might possibly reach her ears; and the bricks on the causeway were, even in the night time, so hot as to be disagreeable to his feet. His exertions, however, produced the desired effect; a sleep of several hours was the consequence; and, at eight o'clock in the morning, off he went to business, which was not to end till six in the evening. What a beautiful instance is this of a heart truly excellent.

We must now quit this scene of quiet happiness and return to Mr. Cobbett's more busy literary life. It has been already stated that after the "Observations," Mr. Bradford and he *published together* no longer. When a pamphlet was ready for the press, they made a bargain for it, and the author took a note of hand, payable in one, two, or three months. That it may be known what gains he derived from the publications that issued from Mr. Bradford's, we have subjoined a list of them, and the sums received in payment:—

| | Dols. | Cents. |
|------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Observations | 0 | 21 |
| Bone to Gnaw, 1st Part | 125 | 0 |
| Kick for a Bite | 20 | 0 |
| Bone to Gnaw, 2nd Part | 40 | 0 |
| Plain English | 100 | 0 |
| New Year's Gift | 100 | 0 |
| Prospect | 18 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 408 | 21 |

With this remuneration Mr. Cobbett was not satisfied,—but the publisher grumbled about the losses he had sustained on their sale, and there, for the present, the matter dropped. But the best way to give the reader an idea of the generosity of this Transatlantic bookseller, is to inform him that the author, upon going into business for himself, offered to purchase the copyright of these pamphlets at the same price for which he had sold them. Mr. Bradford, however, refused to part with them, and we think, therefore, we have pretty good evidence to conclude that the bargain he had made was most advantageous to him.

self, notwithstanding his repeated assertions to the contrary.

All business transactions between these two parties closed with a pamphlet entitled, "The Prospect from the Congress Gallery;" and, as their separation gave rise to various conjectures and reports, we will trouble the reader with an explanation of the matter.

Mr. Cobbett, it seems, had proposed making a brief collection of the debates, with here and there a note by way of remark. It was not his intention to publish it in numbers, but at the end of a session, in a volume; but Mr. Bradford, fearing a want of success in this form, determined on publishing in numbers. This was without the editor's approbation, as was also a subscription that was opened for the support of the work. When about half a number was finished, Mr. Cobbett was informed that many gentlemen had expressed their desire that the work might contain a good deal of original matter, and few debates. In consequence of this he was requested to alter his plan,—a request that he refused to accede to, as well as to continue the work.

The first number (not however by Mr. Cobbett,) was then published, and its success led Mr. Bradford to press for a continuation. His son was sent to offer Mr. C. a hundred dollars a number, in place of the eighteen which had been originally agreed upon; and the other would have accepted so tempting an offer, had it not been for a word that escaped the young man during the conversation. He observed that their customers would be much disappointed, for that his father had *promised* a continuation, and *that it should be very interesting*. This slip of the tongue opened our author's eyes at once. He saw that he was to be made the cat's-paw of a hungry bookseller, and, spurning all the advantages of the offer, positively declined having any thing to do with the work.

At this time he was fully employed, having a translation on his hands for a Mr. Moreau de St. Mery, as well as another work which took up a great deal of his time, so that Bradford, finding there was no chance of the differences between them being adjusted, sent the following pithy note:—

" Sir,

Send me your account, and a receipt for the last publication, and your money shall be sent by

Yours, &c.

THOMAS BRADFORD."

" Phila. April 22, 1796.

To which Mr. Cobbett returned the following answer:

Philadelphia, March 22, 1796.

" Sir,

" I have the honour to possess your laconic note; but, upon my word I do not understand it. The requesting of a receipt from a person, before any tender of money is made, and the note being dated in April in place of March; these things throw such an obscurity over the whole that I defer complying with its contents, till I have the pleasure of seeing yourself.

I am,

Your most obedient,

Humble Servant,

WILLIAM COBBETT."

This plain, strait-forward way of dealing brought a second note, in these words:—

" Sir,

" Finding you mean to pursue the "Prospect" which you sold to me, I now make a demand of the fulfilment of your contract, and, if honour does not prompt you to fulfil your engagement, you may rely on an application to the laws of my country, and I make no doubt I shall there meet you on such grounds as will convince you I am not to be trifled with.

I am, Yours, &c.

THOMAS BRADFORD."

" March 22nd, 1796.

Here ended the correspondence, and it is hardly necessary to say that the wily bookseller knew his own interests too well to venture with dirty hands into a court of law. It may be remarked too, as somewhat singular, that at the very time when Mr. Bradford was threatening Cobbett with a prosecution for *not* writing, other parties were threatening with equal violence for daring to write at all! It must have been a little difficult to set both parties at open defiance, yet this was done, by continuing to write, and by employing another bookseller.

About this time the enemies of Mr. Cobbett, finding no better ground for complaint, began to assert loudly that he was in the pay of the British Government. Now it is hard to prove a negative; but we think we have sufficient circumstantial evidence to prove the utter falsehood of the charge.

When a foreign government hires a writer, it takes care that his labours shall be distributed, whether the readers are all willing to pay for them or not. . Now this we have positive assurance was never the case with the works of Peter Porcupine. They were never thrust upon people in spite of their remonstrances. Mr. Bradford never dared to assert that any of these pamphlets were ever paid for by any agent of Great Britain. He never could say that the author himself had ever distributed any of them. On the contrary they had at first to encounter every difficulty, yet they made their way, supported by public approbation, and by that alone.—Mr. Bradford even acknowledged, on one occasion, that the British Consul, when he purchased half a dozen of them, insisted upon having them *at the wholesale price*! Did this look like a desire to encourage them? Besides, those who knew any thing of Mr. Bradford, would never believe that he would have lent his aid to a British agent's publications; for, of all Americans, it is acknowledged that he entertained the greatest degree of rancour against this country.

The notion of Mr. Cobbett being in British pay arose from his having now and then taken upon himself to attempt a defence of the character of this nation, and of the intentions of its Government towards the United States. But he never did so except when the subject necessarily demanded it; and, if he did give way to his indignation on these occasions, what more did he do than his duty? When a man hears his country reviled, does it require that he should be paid for speaking in its defence?

His writings, the first pamphlet excepted, had no other object than that of keeping alive an attachment to the constitution of the United States, and to paint in their true colours those who were its enemies; to warn the people of all ranks and descriptions, of the danger of admitting among them the anarchical and blasphemous

principle of the French Revolutionists; principles as opposite to those of liberty as the poles to each other. If, therefore, he wrote at the instance of a British agent, that agent must certainly have deserved the thanks of all the real friends of America. But, argued his opponents, what right has this man to meddle with the defence of our government at all? To which we reply, the same right that they had to exact his obedience to it. He was liable to be called upon to serve in the militia—to serve against the rebels in the western provinces; and surely a man has a right to defend with his pen, that which he may be called upon to defend with a musket.

The reader will now learn, and probably for the first time, what innumerable shafts of envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, were hourly directed against Mr. Cobbett, by those who hated him for no other earthly reason than because he was a better man than themselves. But he was nerved and braced for the conflict. His enemies, though numerous, were weak and contemptible. They attacked him with falsehood or cowardly insinuation, and he repelled them with the only weapon an honest man has need of—the bare and naked truth. Thus conquered, they slunk back from the conflict with shame and a consciousness of their own utter degradation. Others, however, were ever found to succeed the vanquished in their foul work of aspersion, and thus was Mr. Cobbett's life rendered, for a time, anything but an easy one.

In the spring of the year 1796, Mr. Cobbett took a house in Second Street, Philadelphia, for the purpose of carrying on the bookselling business, which he imagined would be at once a means of getting money, and of propagating more widely his writings against the French. He went into his house in May, but the shop could not be got ready for some time; and, from one delay and another, he was prevented from opening till the second week in July.

Till he took this house, he had remained almost entirely unknown as a writer. A few persons did, indeed, know that he was the person who had assumed the name of Peter Porcupine; but the fact was by no means a matter of notoriety. The moment, however, that he had taken

the lease of a large house, the transaction became a topic of public conversation, and the eyes of the Democrats and the French, who owed him a mutual grudge, were fixed upon him.

He then began to think his situation somewhat perilous. Such disagreeable truths as he had published, no man had dared to utter in the United States, since the breaking out of the war with England. He knew that these truths had mortally offended the leading men among the Democrats, who could, at any time, muster a mob quite sufficient to destroy his house and murder its obnoxious occupant. In this situation, Mr. Cobbett had not a friend to whom he could look with any reasonable hope of receiving efficient support; and, as to the law, he had seen too much of republican justice, to expect anything but persecution from that quarter. In short, there were in Philadelphia, about ten thousand persons, all of whom would have rejoiced to see him murdered; and there might, probably, be two thousand, who would have been very sorry for it; but not above fifty of whom would have raised a hand to save his life,

As the time approached for opening his shop, his few friends grew more anxious for the safety of the adventurer. It was recommended to him to be cautious how he exposed any thing at his window, that might provoke the people; and, above all, not to put up any *aristocratical portraits*, which would certainly cause his windows to be demolished.

Cobbett saw the danger; but also saw that he must, at once, set all danger at defiance, or live in everlasting subjection to the prejudices of a democratical mob. He resolved on the former; and as his shop was to be opened on a Monday morning, he employed himself all day on Sunday, in preparing an exhibition, that he thought would put the courage and the power of his enemies to the test. He put up in his windows, which were very large, all the portraits that he had in his possession of *kings, queens, princes, and nobles*. He had all the English Ministry; several of the Bishops and Judges; the most distinguished Admirals; and, in short, every picture that he thought likely to excite the rage of the enemies of Great Britain.

Early on the Monday morning he took down his shutters. Such a sight had not been seen in Philadelphia for twenty years. Never, since the beginning of the war, had any one dared to exhibit in his window the portrait of George the Third.

In order to make the test as perfect as possible, he had put up some of the leaders of the French Revolution, and had found out, what he considered, fit companions for them. Thus he coupled Franklin and Marat together; and in another place, M'Kean and Ankerstrom. This insult, as it was called, to liberal opinions, did not, of course pass unnoticed; threats, both loud and deep, were heard on all sides, and a few days afterwards Mr. Oldden, his landlord, transmitted to him the following infamous anonymous letter which he had just received. The letter, which we give entire, to show the virulence of his enemies, ran thus:—

“ To Mr. John Oldden, Merchant,
Chesnut Street,

“ Sir,

“A certain William Cobbett, alias Peter Porcupine, I am informed is your tenant. This daring *scurdrel*, not satisfied with having repeatedly traduced the people of this country, vilified the most eminent and patriotic characters among us, and grossly abused our allies, the French, in his detestable productions, has now the astonishing effrontry to expose those very publications at his window for sale, as well as certain prints indicative of the prowess of our enemies the British and the disgrace of the French. Calculating largely upon the moderation or rather pusillanimity of our citizens, this puppy supposes he may even insult us with impunity. But he will, ere long, find himself dreadfully mistaken. Though his miserable publications have not been hitherto considered worthy of notice, the late manifestation of his impudence and enmity to this country will not be passed over. With a view, therefore, of preventing your feeling the blow designed for him, I now address you. When the time of retribution arrives, it may not be convenient to discriminate between the innocent and the guilty. Your property, therefore, may suffer. For, depend upon it, brick walls will not

screen the rascal from punishment when once the business is undertaken. As a friend, therefore, I advise you to save your property by either compelling Mr. Porcupine to leave your house, or at all events oblige him to cease exposing his abominable productions, or any of his courtly prints at his window for sale. In this way only you may avoid danger to your house, and perhaps save the rotten carcass of your tenant for the present.

“ A HINT.”

“ July 16th, 1799.”

Mr. Cobbett read this letter, and of course laughed heartily at its contents, and the threats it held out; for, of all the expedients they could have hit upon to terrify a man of such a temperament as his, this certainly was the most ill-contrived and ridiculous. Had they, indeed, studied for years, they could not have found out anything that would have pleased him so well. It would serve to silence their clamours about their boasted liberty of the press; it would prove to the people, most fully, the truth of what he had always told them:—that they knew nothing of liberty but the name. It proved to all the world that the Americans had long dreaded him; that they still continued to do so, and that he despised them from the bottom of his heart.

Conscious as he was of his own superiority over enemies utterly worthless, Mr. Cobbett continued to proceed in his old course. His publications went on as heretofore, and in his windows were still exhibited the offensive prints that had given such mortal umbrage to his sensitive opponents. In the mean time, however, attacks were made upon him in every quarter—other threatening letters were sent—and the the most violent pamphlets were published to libel and defame the man they hoped to drive away from the soil where he had rendered himself so obnoxious. Of these publications we shall only enumerate a few as marked with the greatest degree of virulence and mendacity:—“ A Blue Shop for Peter Porcupine;” “ A Pill for Peter Porcupine;” “ Peter Porcupine Detected;” “ A Roaster for Peter Porcupine;” “ A History of Peter Porcupine;” “ A Picture of Peter Porcupine;” &c.

It cannot be wondered at then, if the said "Peter Porcupine," began to think himself a person of some importance at this period: for, though his enemies affected to despise him, he, at the same time, knew that they dreaded the power of his pen, even more than they did the swords of their enemies, or the clamours of the disaffected. He did feel an honest pride at this manifestation of the importance to which he had raised himself, and, if proof he wanted, we have it in the following extract of a letter to his father, dated in September 1796:

"Dear Father," he says, "when you used to set me off to work in the morning, dressed in my blue smock frock and woollen spatterdashes, with my bag of bread and cheese and bottle of small beer swung over my shoulder on the little crook that my old god-father Boxall gave me, little did you imagine that I should one day become so great a man as to have my picture stuck in the windows, and have four whole books published about me in the course of one week."—Yet such was the fact, and, if people at the present day accuse William Cobbett of being somewhat too much of an egotist, let them consider the prominent situation he has always maintained, and then, wonder if they can, that he was—what any other man, placed in the same situation would become—though probably with less discretion, and, consequently with less ability to keep possession of the prominent station to which he had elevated himself.

Attacked as he was on all hands, Mr. Cobbett now began to devise some plan by which he might at the same time defend himself from the poisoned weapons of his adversaries, and add to those means which an increasing family rendered the more absolutely necessary. Towards fulfilling this design, nothing appeared to him so advantageous as a newspaper, which, if conducted with spirit, he was well assured would prove both lucrative and an efficient channel by which he might circulate those bold opinions which he had the courage to promulgate. No sooner was this project formed than acted upon, and, in the short space of five weeks, he, by his own individual exertions, contrived to send forth the first number from the press. This was the

celebrated "Porcupine's Gazette," against which the whole power of the Democratical party was opposed. The first publication appeared on Saturday, March 4th, 1797, and continued, without intermission, every day, Sundays excepted, till the month of January, 1806. The sale fully realized his most sanguine hopes, and he had thus the happiness, not only of filling up all his vacant time, but also of increasing the domestic comforts of his family.

It will readily be conceived that the violent hostility of his enemies was excited to the highest pitch against the man who thus, in defiance of all opposition, seemed to rise with even greater might in proportion as he was vilified and attacked. Innuendoes of dark meaning, and open threats of a terrible retribution were of constant occurrence, so that Cobbett, at length, to show the contempt, and utter disregard in which he held such paltry scribblers, published in his Gazette the following squib, which he called his

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

In the name of Fun, Amen. I, Peter Porcupine, pamphleteer and newsmonger, being (as yet) sound both in body and in mind, do, this fifteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven, make, declare, and publish this my **LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT**, in manner, form, and substance following, to wit:

IN PRIMIS. I leave my body to Dr. Michael Leib, a member of the Legislature of Pennsylvania, to be by him dissected (if he knows how to do it) in presence of the Rump of the Democratic Society. In it they will find a heart that held them in abhorrence, that never palpitated at their threats, and that, to its beat bade them defiance. But my chief motive for making this bequest is, that my spirit may look down with contempt on their cannibal-like triumph over a breathless corpse.

ITEM, As I make no doubt that the abovesaid Dr. Leib (and some other doctors that I could mention) would like very well to skin me, I request that they, or one of them may do it; and that the said Leib's father

may tan my skin ; after which I desire my executors have eight copies of my works complete, bound in it, one copy to be presented to the five Sultans of France ; one to teach of their Divans ; one to the Governor of Pennsylvania ; to Citizens Maddison, Giles, and Galatin, one each ; and the remaining one to the Democratic Society of Philadelphia ; to be carefully preserved among their archives.

ITEM. To the Mayor, Aldermen, and Councils of the City of Philadelphia, I bequeath all the sturdy young hucksters, who infest the market, and who, to maintain their bastards, tax the honest inhabitants many thousand pounds annually. I request them to take them into their worshipful keeping—to chasten their bodies for the good of their souls ; and, moreover to keep a sharp look out after their gallants ; and remind the latter of the old proverb, Touch pot, touch penny.

ITEM. To Thomas Jefferson, philosopher, I leave a curious Norway Spider, with a hundred legs and nine pair of eyes ; likewise the first black cut-throat general he can catch hold of, to be flayed alive, in order to determine with more certainty the real cause of the dark colour of his skin ; and should the said Thomas Jefferson survive Banneker, the almanack maker, I request he will get the brains of said Philomath carefully dissected, to satisfy the world in what respects they differ from those of a white man.

ITEM. To the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia I will and bequeath a correct copy of Thornton's Plan for abolishing the use of the English language, and for introducing in its stead a republican one, the representative characters of which bear a strong resemblance to pot-hooks and hangers ; and for the discovery of which plan, the said society did, in the year 1793, grant to the said language-maker 500 dollars premium. It is my earnest desire, that the copy of this valuable performance, which I hereby present, may be shown to all travelling literati, as a proof of the ingenuity of the author, and of the wisdom of the Society.

ITEM. To Dr. Benjamin Rush, I will and bequeath a copy of the Censor for January 1797 ; but upon the

express condition, that he does not in any wise or guise, either at the time of my death, or six months after, pretend to speak, write, or publish an eulogium on me, my calling or character, either literary, military, civil, or political.

ITEM. To my dear fellow-labourer, Noah Webster, "gentleman-citizen," esquire, and newsman. I will and bequeath a prognosticating barometer of curious construction and great utility, by which, at a single glance, the said Noah will be able to discern the exact state that the publicmind will be in in the ensuing year, and will thereby be enabled to trim by degrees, and not expose himself to detection, as he now does by his sudden lee-shore tacks. I likewise bequeath to the said "gentleman-citizen," six Spanish milled dollars, to be expended on a new plate of his portrait at the head of his spelling-book, that which graces it at present being so ugly, that it scares the children from their lessons; but this legacy is to be paid him only on condition that he leave out the title of Squire, at bottom of said picture, which is extremely odious in an American school book, and must inevitably tend to corrupt the political principles of the republican babies that behold it. And I do most earnestly desire, exhort, and conjure the said squire newsman to change the title of his paper, "The Minerva," for that of "The Political Centaur."

ITEM. To F. A. Muhlenburgh, Esq. speaker of a late House of Representatives of the United States, I leave a most superbly finished statue of Janus.

ITEM. To Tom the Tinker, I leave a liberty cap, a tri-coloured cockade, a wheelbarrow full of oysters, and a hog'shead of grog. I also leave him three blank checks on the Bank of Pennsylvania, leaving him the task of filling them up; requesting him, however, to be rather more merciful than he has shewn himself heretofore.

ITEM. To the Governor of Pennsylvania and Cashier of the Bank of the said State, as to joint legatees, I will and bequeath that good old proverb, *Honesty is the best Policy*. And this legacy I have chosen for

them worthy gentlemen, as the only thing about which I am sure they will never disagree.

ITEM, To Trench Coxe, of Philadelphia, citizen, I will and bequeath a crown of hemlock, as a recompense for his attempt to throw an odium on the administration of General Washington; and I must positively enjoin on my executors, to see that the said crown be shaped exactly like that which this spindleshanked legatee wore before General Howe, when he made his triumphant entry into Philadelphia.

ITEM, To Thomas Lord Bradford (otherwise called Goosy Tom), bookseller, printer, newsman, and member of the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, I will and bequeath a copy of the Peerage of Great Britain, in order that the said Lord Thomas may the more exactly ascertain what probability there is of his succeeding to the seat which his noble relation now fills in the House of Lords.

ITEM, To all and singular the authors in the United States, whether they write prose or verse, I will and bequeath a copy of my Life and Adventures, and I advise the said authors to study with particular care the fortieth and forty-first pages thereof; more especially, and above all things, I exhort and conjure them never "*to publish it together,*" though the book seller should be a saint.

ITEM, To Edward Randolph, Esq., late Secretary of State, to Mr. J. A. Dallas, Secretary of the State of Pennsylvania, and his Excellency Thomas Mufflin, Governor of the said unfortunate State, I will and bequeath to each of them, a copy of the sixteenth paragraph of Fauchett's intercepted letter.

ITEM, To citizen J, Swanwick, Member of Congress, by the will and consent of the sovereign people, I leave bills of exchange in London, to an enormous amount; they are all protested, indeed, but, if properly managed, may be turned to good account. I likewise bequeath to the said John, a small treatise by an Italian author, wherein the secret of pleasing the ladies is developed, and reduced to a mere mechanical operation, without the least dependence on

the precarious aid of the passions ; hoping that these instances of my liberality will produce in the mind of the little legislator, effects quite different from those produced therein by the King of Great Britain's pension to his parent.

ITEM. To the Editors of the Boston Chronicle, the New York Argus, and the Philadelphia Merchant's Advertiser, I will and bequeath one ounce of modesty and love of truth, to be equally divided between them. I should have been more liberal in this bequest, were I not well assured that one ounce is more than they will ever make use of.

ITEM. To Franklin Bache, editor of the Aurora of Philadelphia, I will and bequeath a small bundle of French assignats, which I brought with me from the country of equality. If these should be too light in value for his pressing exigencies, I desire my executors, or any one of them, to bestow on him a second part to what he has lately received in Southwark ; and as a further proof of my goodwill and affection, I request him to accept of a gag, and a brand new pair of fetters, which, if he should refuse, I will and bequeath him in lieu thereof—my malediction.

ITEM. To my beloved countrymen, the people of old England, I will and bequeath a copy of Dr. Priestley's Charity Sermon for the benefit of poor emigrants ; and to the said preaching philosopher himself, I bequeath a heart full of disappointment, grief, and despair.

ITEM. To the good people in France, who remain attached to their sovereign, particularly to those among whom I was hospitably received, I bequeath each a good strong dagger, hoping, most sincerely, that they may yet find courage enough to carry them to the hearts of their abominable tyrants.

ITEM. To Citizen Munro, I will and bequeath my chamber looking-glass. It is a plain but exceedingly true mirror : in it he will see the exact likeness of a traitor, who has bartered the honour and interest of his country to a perfidious and savage enemy.

ITEM. To the republican Britons, who have fled from the hands of justice in their own country, and who are a scandal, a nuisance, and a disgrace to this, I bequeath hunger and nakedness; scorn, and reproach; and I do hereby positively enjoin on my executors to contribute five hundred dollars to the erection of gallowses and gibbets, for the accommodation of the said imported patriots, when the legislators of this unhappy State shall have the wisdom to countenance such useful establishments.

ITEM. My friend T. F. Callender, the runaway from Scotland, is, of course a partaker in the last mentioned legacy; but, as a particular mark of my attention, I will and bequeath him twenty feet of pine plank, which I request my executors to see made into a pillory, to be kept for his particular use, till a gibbet can be prepared.

ITEM. To Tom Paine, the author of Common Sense, Rights of Man, Age of Reason, and a Letter to General Washington, I bequeath a strong hempen collar, as the only legacy I can think of that is worthy of him, as well as best adapted to render his death in some measure as infamous as his life: and I do hereby direct and order my executors to send it to him by the first safe conveyance, with my compliments, and a request that he would make use of it without delay, that the national razor may not be disgraced by the head of such a monster.

ITEM. To the gaunt and outlandish orator, vulgarly called the Political Sinner, who, in the just order of things, follows next after the last-mentioned legatee, I bequeath the honour of partaking in his catastrophe, that, on their deaths, as well as in their lives, all the world may exclaim, "*See how rogues hang together.*"

ITEM. To all and singular the good people of these States, I leave peace, union, abundance, happiness, untarnished honour, and an unconquerable, everlasting hatred to the French revolutionists, and their destructive abominable principles.

ITEM. To each of my subscribers I leave a quill,

hoping that in their hands it may become a sword against every thing that is hostile to the government and independence of their country.

LASTLY. To my three brothers Paul, Simon and Dick, I leave my whole estate, as well real as personal (first paying the foregoing legacies,) to be equally divided between them, share and share alike. And I do hereby make and constitute my said three brothers the executors of this Last Will; to see the same performed, according to its true intent and meaning, as far as in their power lies.

“PETER PORCUPINE.”

“Witnesses present,

“Philo Fun, }
“Jack Jocus.” }

Though the foregoing extract is lengthy, we have given it entire, as exhibiting a fair specimen of the style of our author in the earliest period of his literary career. In it will be found all the characteristics which marked his writings in a more mature age, when circumstances had so operated as to convert his political principles from Toryism to those of a stern and uncompromising Radical Reformer. The extract will also serve, in some degree, to explain who were the most virulent among the many enemies that had risen against him with the *charitable* design of destroying, or at least, driving him from the land in which he had fixed his home. The most prominent of these are mentioned by name in this curious “Will,” and among them will be found that of the celebrated Tom Paine, whom he alluded to with a degree of hatred the most intense. To some persons it may appear singular that, after expressing himself as he did, in innumerable instances, against Paine, that he should, subsequently, have so completely changed his opinions respecting him, as to bring over his bones to England, as the relics of a man whose worth he estimated in the highest degree. But, it is to be remembered that Cobbett, himself, had seen sufficient reason to adopt most of the opinions promulgated by that most extraordinary writer;—he had become a convert

to his views of political government—and he felt that it was but just, after the acrimony that had existed between them in life, to offer this last atonement to one whom he now regarded as a patriot and philanthropist.

Let it not, however, be imagined that Mr. Cobbett had at the same time been induced to become a convert to the theological views of Thomas Paine, whose writings on this subject, be it understood, he always held in the greatest abhorrence. That he was a Christian, in the fullest acception of the term, we have the most positive proof; in addition to which, his own writings, to the latest period of his life, afford sufficient evidence that his religious principles remained unchanged, and that he continued a consistent member of that church to which he had belonged from his birth.

Quitting this digression into which we have been necessarily led, we will now once more resume the thread of our narrative. The commencement of the "Porcupine Gazette," has been already alluded to, as well as the opposition which was raised against it in all quarters of the United States. As the work proceeded, however, and its success became more and more unequivocal, the wrath and spleen of those who would have suppressed it, showed itself with still increasing and more bitter violence. Every unfair means was adopted to crush a paper that was considered to be inimical to the best interests of America;—the editor was daily libelled and traduced, and his writings were pronounced seditious and detestable.

Thus the warfare continued between Cobbett, single-handed, against a whole host of enemies who were watching with the greatest anxiety for the very first opportunity that might offer, to crush the man who had had the hardihood to attack their nation and character. At length that opportunity seemed to arrive;—a few severe remarks on the Spanish King and his Minister, were loudly complained of as tending to create a breach of that harmony that existed between Spain and the United States, and prosecutions of the most vindictive kind were instantly commenced against Mr. Cobbett, as publisher and proprietor of Porcupine's Gazette. But as this forms a most important feature in the life of the man

we are thus feebly endeavouring to trace, we must, with the reader's permission, descend a little more into the details.

At the time when Mr. Cobbett undertook to publish his daily paper, it was with the intention of annihilating if possible, the intriguing faction which the French had formed in the United States of America. He was fully aware of the arduousness of the task, and of the inconvenience and danger to which he would expose himself. He was prepared to meet the rancorous vengeance of enemies in the hour of their triumph, and the coolness of friends in the hour of his peril; in short, to acquire riches seemed to him quite uncertain; and to be stripped of every farthing of his property seemed extremely probable: but, let what would happen, he was resolved to pursue the object which he had in contemplation, so long as there remained the most distant probability of success.

Among the dangers which presented themselves to him, those to be apprehended from the severity of the law appeared the most formidable; more especially as he happened to be situated in the State of Pennsylvania, where the government, generally speaking, was in the hands of those who had manifested an uniform partiality for the French, and a determined opposition to the ministers and measures of the Federal Government. These persons he knew he had offended by the promulgation of disagreeable truths; and therefore it was natural that he should seek for some standard as a safe rule for his conduct with respect to *the Liberty of his Press*.

To set about the study of the law of *libels*,—to wade through fifty volumes of mysterious tautology, was what he had neither time nor patience to do. He concluded, however, that he might without danger go as great lengths in attacking the enemies of the country, as others went in attacking its friends, that as much zeal might be shown in defending the general government and administration, as in accusing and traducing them; and that as great warmth would be admissible in the cause of virtue, order, and religion, as had long been tolerated in the cause of villainy, insurrection, and blasphemy. Whatever rancour might be harboured

against him in the breasts of particular persons, he depended on *shame* to restrain the arm of power from partiality; he thought no officer of state would, in that country, dare to act towards an honest man with a rigour which had never been experienced by the vilest of miscreants. Alas! all this he thought, and all he thought was wrong; as the following instance will most clearly evince.

Some time in the month of August, 1767, the Spanish Minister, Don Carlos Martinez de Yrujo, applied to the Federal Government, to prosecute Mr. Cobbett, for certain matters, termed *libels*, published in Porcupine's Gazette on the 17th, the 24th and the 31st of July preceding, against himself and his royal master, Charles the Fourth, King of Spain. The Government consented, and the defendant (Mr. Cobbett) was bound over to appear in the Federal District Court, which was to meet in the April following.

Of this preparatory step to a *fair and impartial* trial, the Don was informed. But, it would seem, the information was far from being satisfactory to him; for he delivered in a memorial to the Federal Government, requesting that the trial might come on before the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, of which court Mr. M'Kean, a bitter enemy of Cobbett's, was Chief Justice. It is hardly necessary to say that consent was speedily obtained. A bill of indictment was prepared by the Attorney General of the State, and a warrant immediately issued to seize the defendant.

Now the *trifling* circumstances attending an arrest and giving bail, are scarcely worth relating, but sometimes trifling circumstances serve to convey a more correct idea of the parties concerned in a transaction, and to guide the reader to a more just appreciation of their motives, than the longest and most laboured general account of their conduct.

The Sheriff went to Mr. Cobbett's house for the first time at twelve o'clock; and he was ordered to take him before the Judge at half past one—thus giving him *an hour and a half* to prepare for going out and to procure himself bail. But he was not so destitute of friends as had probably been anticipated. Bail was procured, and

Mr. Cobbett was before the judge at the appointed time.

Mr. M'Kean had the politeness to ask him to sit down. Mr. C. seated himself on one side of the fire, and the Judge on the other. After the latter had talked on for some time to very little purpose, he showed the defendant certain newspapers, and asked him if *he had printed and published them*. To this Mr. Cobbett replied, that *the law did not require him to answer any questions in that stage of the business; and that, therefore he should not do it*. At this reply, though a very prudent and a very proper one, he waxed exceeding wrath. He instantly ordered Mr. Cobbett to get off his chair, and stand up before him, though he himself had invited him to sit down! At length, however, the business between them having been disposed of, the defendant was graciously permitted to return home till the issue of the trial should be known.

The charge contained in the Bill of Indictment, which the writer of these pages has seen, lie buried in such a multitude of words which mean nothing, or at least nothing to the purpose, that they are very difficult to be understood. Some one says of a man extremely verbose in his conversation, that "his wit is like three grains of wheat in a bushel of chaff," and exactly the same may with truth be said of the meaning of this Bill. The *three libels*, as they are called, might all be contained in a quarter of a page, whereas the Bill is swelled out to between four and five pages;—however, the lawyers must live, and this fact proves that they are not more honest in America than they are in England.

Of the three publications which were thus miscalled libels, two of them only originated in Porcupine's Gazette, the other being taken from a paper called the Gazette of the United States, and even the two which made their appearance through Mr. Cobbett's means, he had not the honour to be the author of.

They were both written by gentlemen belonging to Philadelphia: *native* Americans, men who were determined Whigs during the war for independence, republicans in principle, and firmly attached to the then existing government.

In the first of those two publications, though there was certainly nothing libellous, it must be confessed there was a great deal of *warmth*; and if the admission of an essay extraordinarily warm, abounding in strong expressions of resentment and indignation, were ever justifiable, it most assuredly was on this occasion. The communication in question was sent to Mr. Cobbett at a moment when the city of Philadelphia, just quieted after the appeal of the French Minister, Adet, rang with the daring, the degrading, the contemptuous insult, which the Spaniard, Yrujo had offered to the Government of America, and to every individual living under it.

He had published a most audacious letter to Mr. Pickering, the Secretary of State, containing a summary of all that is insolent. This letter had been handed and hawked about the city; and had, by his secretary, been sent to every public print for insertion. It had gone forth to the universe; and, that it tended to degrade and defame America, we need no other proof than the following paragraph from a London Gazette of the 14th of September 1797:—

“The Americans are, according to our last advices from New York, paying dear for their *independence*. The French take all their vessels, block up their very rivers, punish their seamen like malefactors, and actually make them pay for the shot they fire at them; while the Spanish Minister, with impunity, insults and braves their poor enfeebled government. He has written to Timothy Pickering Esq., their first Secretary of State, in a language that Buonaparte would not venture to assume to his Cisalpine convention, or Citizen Noel to the fallen and degraded Dutch; and, what very much aggravates the insult, he has, without permission from the President of the General Congress, communicated this letter to the people, as a sort of manifesto, or appeal to them from their Government. Nothing of this kind, we believe, ever passed *unresented*, except in a conquered or invaded country; and we cannot help lamenting that so very little spirit should be found in any people, but particularly in a people who boast their origin from Britons.”

Now, though this deep shame and disgrace had gone

abroad, was not Mr. Cobbett, or any other printer to admit anything in his paper that served to mark the strong indignation it inspired at home? Was the press to be free for the Spaniard alone? Was he to be allowed to taunt, to threaten, and despise? If so;—if no man, by assuming a bold, an indignant, and retaliating tone, was to make an effort to rescue his country and himself from dishonour, without being harassed with a prosecution, without hazarding the punishment of a murderer, then must America have acknowledged herself a fallen State indeed!

But we have said enough we think to convince the reader, that Mr. Cobbett was actuated by no unworthy motives. He saw ample reason to fear that America, his adopted land, was fast falling into a state of degradation; he witnessed the insults which she hourly received from the Ministers of other States, and he stepped forward as a good and virtuous man ever would do, to rescue her from the reproach that he foresaw would follow. Yet for that he was prosecuted—dragged into a court of justice, and only rescued from his perilous situation by the honest impartiality of a majority of the Grand Jury, who *ignored* the Bill, and thus restored Mr. Cobbett to that station of society which he had filled with so much credit among all those whose good opinions he conceived it honourable to possess.

Matters now went on tolerably smoothly for some time;—Cobbett, it is true, attacked his old opponents with the same vigour as before, and they retaliated with as much bitterness as their humble means would allow. Still, however, they came to no open rupture till an attack upon Dr. Rush, a physician of Philadelphia, served to open an old wound which had never been properly healed. As the consequence of the ulterior proceedings in this affair led to the departure of Mr. Cobbett from America, we cannot, in justice to the reader, pass slightly over a subject of such moment in the life of this extraordinary man.

It seems that during the continuance, in Philadelphia, of the yellow fever of 1793, the wild and novel practice of bleeding a patient five or six times a day, and plying him, at the same time, with doses of *calomel*, or *mercurial purges*, became the subject of very warm discussions

amongst the medical men of that city. At the head of the sticklers for this practice, was Dr. Benjamin Rush. Indeed the practice originated with him, unless we believe that such a man as Dr. Sangrado, really existed and practised physic; for in the ranks of no other medical writer could Rush find a sanction to his practice, and it is well known that every eminent physician, at that time in Philadelphia, totally disapproved of it.

In the dispute of 1793 Rush was fairly defeated. Still, however, resolved not to acknowledge himself in an error, but to support his practice if possible, he stopped till the fever was over, and then, like the famous physician of Valladolid, he *wrote a book*. The book produced no more effect than his own obstinate assertions had done before; men could not be persuaded that "*bleeding almost to death*," was likely to save life; and bleeding and mercurial purges became the subject of general dread.

When, therefore, the yellow fever again broke out in 1797, Dr. Rush and his pupils (who were the only persons that followed the practice) found very little to do. The Doctor recommenced writing in the newspapers, but with somewhat less confidence and more caution than formerly. He did not, (except in a few instances,) address himself particularly to any person, but published letters, sent to him by his brethren of the lancet practice, giving accounts of the great cures wrought by *bleeding and mercurial purges*, which latter were sometimes called *Rush's Powders*. Occasionally a letter from Rush to some other of the learned tribe would appear, preceded by a letter *requesting information* respecting his mode of treating patients. Thus called upon, the grand master of the art seldom failed to expatiate largely on the virtue of his remedies and on the success of their application.

These attempts to gain the confidence of the Philadelphians did not, however, pass unperceived. Many gentlemen, (not physicians) expressed to Mr. Cobbett their dread of the practice and their indignation at the arts that were made use of to render it prevalent. They thought, and not without reason, that it was lawful, just, and fair to employ a newspaper in decrying what other newspapers had been employed to extol. In fact, Mr. Cobbett wanted very little persuasion to induce him to combat the

commendations of a practice, which he had always looked upon as a scourge to the city in which he lived. He lashed the quackery of the system, and published a number of squibs, puns, epigrams, and quotations from Gil Blas.

In this *petite guerre* he had an excellent auxiliary in a Mr. Fenno, a young man who occasionally wrote for the Gazette. Never was a paper war carried on with greater activity and perseverance, or crowned with more complete success. It began about the middle of September, and before October was ended, "*bleeding almost to death*" and *calomel* were the standing jests of the town. Dr. Rush suppressed his mortification for some time, but at last the sting became too painful, and he resolved to have his revenge in law!

That this man, who had promulgated his opinions, and extolled his practice in paragraphs, letters, pamphlets and books without number, and who had, in these various publications, ridiculed, decried, and abused both the practice and the persons of his opponents;—that this man should have the audacity to appeal to the law for a protection from the hostility of the press, astonished every body; and though it was clearly perceived, that he never would have made the appeal but with the certitude of being able to bring the cause before a judge notoriously inimical to Cobbett, yet no one imagined that he would ever dare to pursue the matter to a trial.

The suit, however, against Mr. Fenno was dropped;—*he was an American!* That against Mr. Cobbett was put off from court to court for *upwards of two years*, when a favourable juncture of circumstances encouraged the plaintiff to bring it on, and when, for the publication of a string of *squibs*, in which no man of candour will be able to discover any thing malicious or libellous, a Philadelphian court and jury, on the 14th December, 1799, adjudged Mr. Cobbett to pay the enormous sum of FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS.

To show the malignity of the prosecutor's feelings, let the reader observe his conduct subsequent to the trial. So eager was Dr. Rush to touch the profits of his long and unwearied labours, that, in a few hours after the verdict was given, he sent off expresses to execute the judg-

ment at New York—to which place Cobbett had fled.—His victim, however, gave the requisite bail, and thus escaped the horrors of a dungeon. But this seems to have provoked them exceedingly, for they then sent for the sheriff to seize upon the effects which he had advertised for sale in his house at Philadelphia; they lodged an attachment in the hands of his agent in that city; they hunted out his clerk, who was left at Philadelphia to collect debts, and attached all that he might have, or receive, belonging to his master; nay, they had the unparalleled meanness to lodge attachments with every one whom they suspected to have a horse, a cow, or dog, or any thing of Mr. Cobbett's in his possession. They afterwards made a sale of the property they found in his house, where, amidst the exulting yells of the mob, they sold for about *four hundred dollars* what ought to have brought *nine hundred or a thousand*!

This trial was begun on the 13th, and the *five thousand dollars* verdict was given on the 14th of December. It is customary after every verdict to allow four days previous to entering up the judgment, in order to enable the defendant to prepare for application for an arrest of judgment. On the 11th Mr. Cobbett's counsel made a motion for a rule to show cause why the verdict and judgment should not be set aside for excessiveness of damages—which motion, however, was *rejected*;—and well might they reject it,—for, on the 16th (the day previous) he had actually been arrested for the 5,000 dollars at New York! But the partiality of his enemies does not appear in its true light till it is known that Mr. Fenno, who was sued at the same time, for the very same pretended libel, was suffered to escape with impunity. They hated Fenno for his royalist principles, but he, being an *American*, they knew that it would be hard to find a jury to assess heavy damages against him, and to have given 5,000 dollars against Mr. Cobbett, while they gave perhaps only 100, against him would have appeared too glaring a proof of infamy.

Mr. Cobbett now began to find that America would no longer afford a secure or comfortable asylum for one, whom all parties seemed determined to persecute and hunt out of their dominions. He had raised up many enemies

there by his violent attacks upon several distinguished personages who had taken a leading part in establishing the independence of the American Colonies. His sketches of Paine, Franklin, and Rush, were caustic in the extreme and, it is not surprising, therefore, that the admirers of those personages should have pursued the steps they did for the purpose ridding themselves of a man whose writings were so diametrically opposed to all that they considered the best interests of their young and thriving states.

Such being the state of affairs, Mr. Cobbett prepared for his immediate departure, and that of his family, from the country in which he had passed the last eight years of his life. He however, entertained some apprehension least his conduct on this occasion should be attributed to a fear of the consequence of a longer residence there, and resolving to deprive his enemies of such a subject of their boasting, he inserted a farewell address in the Philadelphia papers, of which the following is an extract:—

“ You will, doubtless, be astonished, that after having had such a smack of the sweets of *liberty*, I should think of rising thus abruptly from the feast; but this astonishment will cease, when you consider, that under a general term, things diametrically opposite in their natures are frequently included, and that flavours are not more various than tastes. Thus, for instance, nourishment of every species is called *food*, and we *all* like food; but while one is partial to roast beef and plum pudding, another is distractedly fond of flummery and mush; so it is with respect to *liberty*, of which, out of its infinite variety of sorts, yours unfortunately happens to be precisely the sort which I do not like.

“ When people care not two straws for each other, ceremony at parting is mere grimace; and as I have long felt the most perfect indifference with regard to a vast majority of those whom I now address, I shall spare myself the trouble of a ceremonious farewell. Let me not, however, depart from you with indiscriminating contempt. If no man ever had so many and such malignant foes, no one ever had more friends, and those more kind, more sincere, and more faithful. If I have been unjustly vilified by some, others have extolled me far beyond my merits; if

the savages of the city have scared my children in the cradle, those children have, for their father's sake, been soothed and caressed by the affectionate, the gentle, the generous inhabitants of the country, under whose hospitable roofs I have spent some of the happiest hours of my life.

"*Thus and thus*, Americans, will I ever speak of you. In a very little time I shall be beyond the reach of your friendship, or your malice; beyond the hearing of your commendations or your curses; but being out of your power will alter neither my sentiments nor my words. As I have never spoken any thing but truth *to you*, so I will never speak any thing but truth *of you*; the heart of a Briton revolts at an emulation in baseness; and though you have, as a nation, treated me most ungratefully and unjustly, I scorn to repay you with ingratitude and injustice.

"To my friends, who are also the real friends of America, I wish that peace and happiness which virtue ought to ensure, but which I greatly fear they will not find; and as to my enemies, I can wish them no severer scourge than that which they are preparing for themselves and their country. With this I depart for my native land, where neither the moth of *Democracy*, nor the rust of *Federalism* doth corrupt, and where thieves do not with impunity, break through and steal FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS at a time."

These were the last words published by Mr. Cobbett, during his visit to America. On the 1st of June 1800, he embarked with his family on board a vessel, and returned to the fondly loved home of his birth.

On arriving in England, his fame as a thick and thin Royalist having preceded him, he was taken by the hand by Mr. Pitt, and the other ministers then in power, and became the petted favourite of the Tory part of the aristocracy. Caressed by such distinguished men, Cobbett shortly afterwards entered on business in Pall Mall, as a printer and publisher, putting up, as an unequivocal mark of his principles, the Bible, Crown, and Mitre.

His first step was to reprint all that he had written during his residence in America, which he did in twelve octavo volumes, under the title of "*The Works of Peter Porcupine*." While this was proceeding, however, he was

not idle in his literary career;—he established a morning paper, called the “Porcupine,” which, proving unsuccessful, was subsequently transformed into the Political Register, which he continued till the period of his death. In the commencement of this work he supported, with great power, Mr. Pitt, who was then at the head of affairs. An article on the threatened invasion of England by Napoleon Buonaparte, was reprinted, to the extent, it is said, of two millions and upwards, and was read from almost every pulpit in England. The service thus rendered to the Minister was incalculable; and Mr. Wyndham declared in the House of Commons, that so great was the benefit conferred, that the author deserved a statue of gold to be erected in his honour. His health, too, was drunk at all Tory dinners throughout the country, and the name of William Cobbett was alluded to on all hands with the most profound veneration and respect.

His letters on the subject of the Treaty of Amiens, addressed to Lord Hawkesbury, produced a great sensation, both here and on the Continent. Of their production it was said by the celebrated Swiss historian, Müller, that it was more eloquent than any thing that had appeared since the days of Demosthenes. But Cobbett continued not long to uphold the policy of the dominant party:—he soon saw that his humble origin stood in the way of his future preferment,—and, disgusted with the empty flattery of these purse-proud friends, he began to oppose them with as much vigour, as that with which he had formerly supported their policy.

Mr. Cobbett’s first desertion of the Tory party has been ascribed to a gratuitous insult offered to him by Mr. Pitt, who, with a superciliousness that clouded his great qualities, affected so much of aristocratic *morgue* as to decline the introduction of Mr. Wyndham’s protégé; Mr. Wyndham being a person of higher genealogical rank than Mr. Pitt, and the person proposed to be introduced, Mr. Cobbett, being the man who, after Mr. Burke, had done incomparably the most for preserving the institutions and the honour of England, more, we do not scruple to say, than had been done by Mr. Pitt himself, from his unaided exertions. This is the common version of Mr. Cobbett’s abandonment of Tory principles. We believe it is a cor-

rect one; it is undoubtedly confirmed by the marked and disgraceful neglect of Mr. Cobbett's services, during the interval between his return from America to the period of his change. A person of higher birth, placed in similar circumstances, would for a moment, probably, have felt as Mr. Cobbett felt under this insult, if it was offered; but he would have made allowances for the vulgar weakness of the great and affluent. He would have known, that of all people, great men, and particularly great statesmen, are the most timid; and that if they bestow the favour of their countenance upon fops and fiddlers, players and buffoons, in preference to persons of more laborious habits, and more useful talent, and, certainly of more moral worth, it is because they do not dare to anticipate the *flat* of the vulgar public, in a case in which such anticipation might seem to commit them to sincerity and zeal on particular occasions.

Had Mr. Cobbett, too, belonged to a higher,—though, perhaps, less honourable sphere,—even if he could not have forgiven Mr. Pitt, he would have been too proud, were motives of conscience wanting, to allow that personal considerations should influence his political creed. This sudden change he owed, in part, at least, to the humble circumstances of his birth and education. He was not a man, however, to do anything by halves; having abandoned Tory politics, because he thought he saw the fruit of these politics in Mr. Pitt's ungrateful, arrogant, and contumelious conduct, Mr. Cobbett fell to the opposite side to which he was otherwise naturally attracted by his hostility to overgrown wealth. We should reprint a whole library of his Register, to show with what indefatigable vigour he warred against the manufacturing, the commercial and the financial systems of the empire. He saw that the unfortunate disposition of the time was to promote the augmentation of wealth in few hands, and to keep it in those hands, and he directed his shafts accordingly. But he was under a particular difficulty in this matter. He had originally committed himself against a paper currency, by treating as universal and permanent, its partial and temporary ill effects. He prophesied that such a currency could not be continued, and that a departure from it would necessarily lead to ruin. The first part of this pro-

phcey was unhappily acted upon, and the acting upon it went a great way towards realizing the second.

In the course of his subsequent writings, Mr. Cobbett, more than once avers that personal wrong, real or imagined, done to himself, had given rise to feelings that ever afterwards influenced his public conduct. It was thus with reference to the thousand pounds he had to pay, under the Regency, as the pecuniary part of a penalty incurred by the publication of a libel. His desire for revenge on the Regent, induced him, at an after period, to espouse the cause of the Queen, Caroline, and to persevere, under the most adverse circumstances, until he triumphed in exhibiting to the world one of the most atrocious and unnatural conspiracies that ever disgraced a civilized country. Be this as it may, however, Mr. Cobbett, from this time abandoned a political course which he has since confessed was adopted from the ardour of his feelings in favour of his country, rather than from grave deliberation; and we need not tell our readers that, since his conversion to Radical Reform principles, he has consistently and zealously advocated, through evil report and through good report, those liberal doctrines that are identified with the welfare of the British empire, and the happiness of mankind.

It was in the year 1805 that Mr. Cobbett first came out openly in the character of a Reformer, and we will challenge his most inveterate revilers to lay their fingers upon any passage in his writings since that time,—when he may fairly be said to have commenced his political career,—that will bear the oft-repeated allegation of tergiversation—that is, a wilful shifting of opinion from interested and dishonourable motives. We do not mean to say that his writings exhibit no discrepancies in statement, or no variations in opinion. We do not think, if such a thing were possible, in so voluminous and rapid a writer, during the space of thirty years, it would be any great matter to boast of in his favour. Has he not ever been the steady and determined advocate of economical and efficient government—of equalized and reduced expenditure—of a large constituency—of institutions controlled by public opinion and by public supervision—of a limited monarchy—of the largest extent of civil and political freedom, and

of a free and independent press? Has he not uniformly opposed useless places and unmerited pensions—a large standing army—partial or unequally-operating duties or imposts—expensive laws—pampered and profligate courtiers—and the excessive and ill-requited labour of the poor? What are the great political questions upon which he has apostatised, or equivocated, or contradicted himself? We deny that there are any such, and challenge his calumniators to the proof. His prejudices we do not deny; they were many and strong, and often betrayed him into statements and reasonings which cannot be denied to be absurd, and greatly at variance with the conclusions at which he arrived upon those subjects where cool and impartial reason alone had sway. But, we must add, that if those prejudices be carefully looked into and accurately analysed, they will be found to originate in identically the same feeling which prompted him throughout his long political life;—an ardent love of his country, an attachment to the theory of her institutions, and a fervent desire to see them relieved from the various innovations and abuses which he was of opinion diminished their lustre, impaired their utility, or periled their stability.

That Mr. Cobbett was more changeable as to men than as to measures, we are free to admit. It has often happened that those who once ranked high in his estimation, subsequently became exposed to his most unsparing hostility; but there was reason for this—sometimes of a personal, but more frequently of a public nature. A writer in the "*Standard*" evening newspaper, who understood and appreciated his character better we think than any other, thus accounts, as it seems to us, satisfactorily, for his apparent inconsistency in this particular:—

"The pride of purse persecuted him in America, and persecuted him no less in England, as it persecutes us all, and will continue to persecute, until in the fulness of its cup, it shall be laid low. The purse-proud Americans were a democracy; and, therefore, in America Mr. Cobbett was a Royalist. In England the vice is impartially distributed amongst all classes of the wealthy; and, therefore, in England, Mr. Cobbett's resentment took a more definite—perhaps a more just—direction, associating himself with whatever party most unequivocally prosecuted the war against wealth."

The foregoing defence of Mr. Cobbett's political conduct has been rather more lengthy than we had intended; but, having witnessed his complete conversion from the Tory doctrines of Mr. Pitt, to those afterwards so ably advocated by himself, we found it impossible conscientiously to discharge the duties of a biographer without entering somewhat more into detail upon this important period of his life. However, to proceed:—

Mr. Cobbett had no sooner quitted the ranks of the Tory party than he commenced an attack upon the Addington Administration with the utmost energy and effect. Of the peace of Amiens he disapproved as being dangerous and disgraceful; and, in consequence of his refusal to illuminate upon that inglorious occasion, his house was assailed by a deluded and ignorant mob. So extensive, however, became the sale of his *Political Register*, that he was enabled to extend his assistance to many of his relations, and to purchase a considerable estate at Botley, in Hampshire, at which place he fixed his residence, and occupied his leisure hours in the business of farming, which, having been the earliest occupation of his life, was now a source of the greatest pleasure, and some degree of profit.

In the year 1804, Mr. Cobbett turned his attentions towards certain abuses that existed in the government of unhappy Ireland, and in the course of some very severe remarks upon the subject, he animadverted with great warmth on the conduct of the Earl of Hardwicke (Lord Lieutenant), Lord Redesdale (Lord Chancellor), and other officers of state in that country. To revenge themselves for this merciless flagellation, the strong arm of the law was appealed to, and, on the 25th of May, in that year, he was tried on an information for a libel in the Court of King's Bench, when damages were given against him for £500.—But Cobbett still buffeted manfully against the storm that threatened to overwhelm him—he rose superior to his enemies—and the *Register* continued, in spite of all the efforts that were made to suppress it.

In the spring of the year 1805, Mr. Cobbett, finding that Mr. Cavendish Bradshaw had been obliged to vacate his seat for the borough of Honiton, in consequence of the acceptance of an office in the Exchequer of Ireland, deter-

mined to make a stand against him. He accordingly repaired to Devonshire, and in an advertisement to the electors, intimated, that he should stand forward, if no other person presented himself, on *independent principles*.

At this time Lord Cochrane happening to return to Plymouth after a successful cruize, heard by accident, that some of the electors of Honiton were desirous of the presence of a candidate, who, uniting wealth with respectability, might fight their battle at his own expense. This borough, which had long been under the influence of the family of Yonge, had recently emancipated itself, in consequence of the declining fortunes of the head of that house. The voters had split into parties, some of which were supposed to be desirous to put up the elective franchise to the best bidder. Others no doubt, were actuated by purer and nobler motives, and would have blushed at the idea of a bribe. In a few days afterwards Lord Cochrane happening to read the before mentioned appeal of Mr. Cobbett, and conceiving that he really had no desire to present himself to the electors of Honiton, immediately posted to that borough, and offered his services. Cobbett gladly withdrew from the contest; his purpose had been served by the arrival of a liberal candidate,—and, whatever interest he possessed was given for the support of that gallant officer.

The election took place on the 10th of June, when, after a speech from Mr. Cavendish Bradshaw, Lord Cochrane addressed the electors in an able speech, wherein he exposed the corrupt system of the then existing government,—pointed out the remedy, and promised, if chosen for their representative, to do all that was in his power towards redressing the wrongs of the people. This appeal was, however, of no use, the gold of his opponent had already purchased the votes of this *virtuous* constituency, and the Honourable Cavendish Bradshaw was declared duly elected by a majority of 135.

Mr. Cobbett now became deeply involved in the political transactions of this country;—he directed public attention to men of liberal views; and in the year 1807 when the dissolution of Parliament took place, he patronized and supported Sir Frances Burdett, who then, for the first time offered himself for the city of Westminster. After a severe contest the Baronet was elected

with Lord Cochrane for his colleague, and has continued to sit for Westminster from that period to the present time. In all the subsequent contests for that city, Mr. Cobbett was ever found among the steadiest and most unflinching of the partizans of Sir Francis; and the friendship which had thus sprung up between them continued unabated until it was suddenly, and finally dissolved by a rupture between them in the year 1817. As this quarrel, and the causes that are supposed to have led to it have been the frequent subject of animadversion, we will now refer to this portion of Mr. Cobbett's history, merely premising that Sir Francis Burdett lent, or, what is more probable, *gave* the sum of two thousand pounds to Mr. C. in a moment of pressing emergency, for the purpose of relieving him from some embarrassments that untoward events had brought on. For the purpose of fully explaining this affair, we will give Cobbett's own account of it, which we extract from his Register of a few years back. The article in question was in answer to a direct charge of sordidness and ingratitude, brought against him by the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*; and, as the reply to it at once disposes of these charges, we shall, notwithstanding its length, lay it before our readers. It is but an act of justice to his memory, and to the cause of which he was the consistent and able champion. This refutation, which is fair and manly, we give in his own words:—

“The Westminster elections, all put together, did not cost me so little as 1,500*l*. I, at the request of Col. Bosville, ordered public breakfasts at several places, during the election of Mr. Paull. Mr. Paull became unable to pay. He died; in short, and the breakfast-furnishers came upon me; and first and last, I had to pay them, together with expenses attending it, upwards of twelve hundred pounds, instead of which, a halter would have suited them exceedingly well. However, I had to pay the money; but Colonel Bosville, in consideration of those payments, gave me a thousand pounds soon after I entered the prison of Newgate, (in 1810); with which thousand pounds I paid a printer his bill, and a paper-maker one of his bills;—but he did not give me the thousand pounds to pay the *fine* with, as some people have thought; and, what

remains unpaid to me of that fine, ought to be paid me yet. Burdett's elections for Westminster, cost me, from first to last, upwards of three hundred pounds, if I include my subscriptions upon various occasions, since his first election, for various purposes tending to uphold him, I, looking upon that as necessary to the cause of Parliamentary Reform. There was a large subscription for the Coventry election; principally coming from one generous man, to name whom I should be glad to have permission. But I have paid more than five hundred pounds on account of that election, since the election was over. Aye, and three hundred and seventy odd pounds of it, since I was a bankrupt, and had to begin the world anew, without a sheet of paper to print on, without a copyright left in my possession, and without table, chair or bed. Then take in the celebrated two thousand pounds of Burdett; and say that he did lend it. Then it was not a gift. Add that to the rest, and call it raising of contributions upon the public; but then, if he lent it, why did he not come and prove it to be a debt, when he was called upon so to do? Loan or gift, it never went for a moment into my pocket. I gave the check to Mr. Swan, who was also an acquaintance of his own; at whose house he had frequently been, day and night; and he knows that as well as I do. But, add this; say that it was a debt that I owed; it was so; but that debt arose, like numerous others, from my preferring what I thought the public interest to my own. The judges had blasted me, as Gibbs had called upon them to do; and they thought, kind old gentlemen as they were, that they had blasted me for ever, and Bayley must remember (if he remembers any thing), that he heard old Grose almost tell me as much. I have lived to see the whole twelve of them, all but Bayley, safely under ground, and Gibbs and Perceval under them.

“Having mentioned the affair of Burdett, I will here, for about the hundredth time, expose the infamous lie which has been circulated, and is still circulated, with regard to that affair. Let it be a loan, which it was not; but, let it be a loan, I owed it him, then; and, the story is, that I, owing it him, wrote to him from America, to say, ‘that I would not pay him.’ Now, the senselessness

of this lie, one would think, would cause it to be universally disbelieved. I was attacking him at the time; I was accusing him distinctly of having abandoned the Reformers in the months of February and March 1817: I was laying it upon him with a heavy hand; I was telling him that I would bring him down, though it might cost me about ten years to do it; and, at this time I was writing to him, and acknowledging the debt, and telling him that I would never pay him! This is not a thing to be believed of a sane person. I was in Long Island, to be sure; but a power of attorney and a writ would have stripped me of every thing that I possessed in that country, down to the very bed that I lay on. But, as if this was not daring enough, I came to England in a year and a half after I had told him that I would never pay him! and I came to London, too, at about the end of that year and a half. What!—come across the sea on purpose to put myself within his reach, after having stirred up his animosity, and declared that I never would pay him! The fact is, I knew that what he had said in his anger he would never swear; and therefore, I was sure that he never would commence a suit against me for that money. Very soon, however, after my arrival, he had an opportunity of swearing, if he chose; for I became a bankrupt, of which he was duly informed, of course; to prove his debt, he must swear to his debt; but, though invited so to do by Mr. Brown, he never did it: and the truth is, that never would he have said a word about the matter, had it not been for his anger at the attacks which I had made upon him.

“But, did I, then, never tell him that I would not pay him? Verbally this is impossible, because he and I were very intimate until the month of February 1817, and we never have spoken together, from that time to this. Was it in writing? then he has the letter! and then he can produce it. But, I will state the substance of the contents of the letter alluded to, and then the reader will see the peg upon which has been hung this abominable lie; and a Member of Parliament, whom I will not now name, will be cautious how he again makes allusion to any thing resting on such a foundation. In Long Island, about the spring of 1818, having had time to learn all the waste, the spo-

liation, the total annihilation of all my property in England of every description, I wrote a circular letter to all those to whom I owed money in England,—amongst whom I included the Baronet. I had been driven away from what was then become really an enormous income. Sidmouth and Castlereagh's Power of Imprisonment Bill had been passed; my choice lay between flight and a dungeon; the laws of personal liberty were abrogated as far as related to me. In writing the above circular letter, I made observations of this sort.—That the laws of civil society made it incumbent on men to pay the debts which they had contracted in that society; but, that if a partial tyranny arose, depriving a portion of the society of the power of pursuing the calling which they had pursued while the debt was contracted; and if the society, as a whole, were either unwilling or unable to abate such tyranny,—then that society had no right to demand the payment of debts due from those who had been proscribed by that tyranny, any more than you have a right to demand of a man the performance of a foot-race which he has contracted to perform, you having first given your assent to the cutting off of one of his legs.' But after having stated this doctrine, I expressly stated in that same letter, that in his case, I would waive every such right of refusal; and that, as soon as I was able, I would satisfy his claim to the last penny, and that no exertion on my part should be wanting for the purpose of effecting that object. If this be not a true statement of the substance of the letter, let him produce the letter.

"However, at last came the bankruptcy; and then the creditor was paid at any rate, as far as the law could pay him. As I said before, he never came to prove his debts, and I was sure he never would; and I owe him nothing now, unless he have some peculiar privilege to set aside the effects even of a bankruptcy. But he himself, never for one moment, regarded any part or portion of this transaction, as being dishonest on my part. He was angry;—he had carried his liberty doctrine so far, and in some respects too far, that he began to wish that he could stop a little short of that which he had so long professed in his more giddy days. Though he had a great opinion of me, he was displeased with me, because I would not

let him stop; because I would pull him along or push him along, or else assail him. This was the fact; and then he said and wrote, while he was angry, that which he did not think, and which he never could have thought. When I came out of the prison of Newgate, (in 1812), he was the chairman of a dinner that was given me at the Crown and Anchor; from that chair he proclaimed me in these very words:—‘pre-eminent alike in talent and in virtue, always sound at his post,—that post the foremost; and always labouring with zeal, and with effect.’ Why, I do not accuse him of inconsistency; I do not set up that cuckoo cry against him; he thought what he said at the time when he uttered the words; and, though age and other circumstances may have a good deal changed him, if he were now on his death-bed, he would say the same thing.

“But the best answer to all these most atrocious calumniators, and to the vile hypocrites who pretend to believe them, is his own conduct with regard to me since 1822. About 1823 or 1824, I think it was, there was a subscription proposed to raise a sum of money to defray the expense of an election to put me into Parliament. This was talked of most in Norfolk. Upon that occasion he, (Sir Francis Burdett) wrote to Richard Gurney, to say that he would subscribe five hundred pounds towards the fund, and that he did not care who knew it. This was told me by Mr. Withers, of Holt, and by Mr. Spalding, of Stoke Holy-Cross; I have mentioned the thing before in print, and it never has been contradicted by him or by anybody else. In 1826, when the election for Preston was coming on; and when a subscription was again proposed for that purpose, he offered again to subscribe, and by letter to Colonel Johnstone, who was then a member of Parliament. Just before I and Sir Thomas Beever set off to Preston, Colonel Johnstone left us at his house, somewhere about Dover-street, I think it was, while he went to ask the Baronet the amount of the sum that he intended to subscribe; because upon that depended the scale of our operations. Colonel Johnstone brought us back word that he would subscribe, but that he did not name the sum; but told us distinctly that he had told him that he would subscribe towards the election. He did

not do it, it is true; but this does not at all mend the matter with regard to him, nor make it worse with regard to me; for here was a second declaration, that he was ready to subscribe to put me into that House of Commons, where I now am without any subscription at all. So that here he is caught, somehow or the other, in a dilemma; either he did not think me a dishonest man, or he was ready to give his money to put a dishonest man into Parliament. It was the former. I do not wish to blacken him so much as to inculcate the belief that it was the latter. When he acted hostile to me, it was from anger, and unjust anger too, for he should have reflected, that, if I were going too far, the fault was his, and not mine. Before I dismiss this proposition, I must observe, that though the subscription for the election for Preston amounted, I believe, to more than seventeen hundred pounds, I did not escape quite clear out of that; and if I add this to the other sums of hard money which I have expended really and truly in the cause of Parliamentary Reform, and if the public acknowledge any debts on that score. I have expended, out of my own earnings, more than all that I have received, the two thousand pounds of Burdett included."

We have been induced to give this long extract, because it serves to throw full light upon the transactions, that have been so often misrepresented, between Sir F. Burdett and Mr. Cobbett. It is true that some of the statements will be found to anticipate many of the important features in the life of the subject of our memoir, but as they are merely alluded to in a slight manner, we have given them entire, as best calculated to clear up the mystery in which the whole affair has been involved. The charges have been brought repeatedly against Mr. Cobbett, and it is our duty as faithful biographers to state the whole case fairly and clearly to the reader, so that he may draw his own conclusions as to the truth or falsehood of the allegations. That Sir Francis Burdett bestowed the two thousand pounds as a free gift upon his fellow labourer in the cause of Reform, there can be little or no doubt, and it is to be regretted that he should afterwards, when the disagreement broke out between them, have given currency to a report—that the sum had been advanced

only in the shape of a loan. Why, had this really been the case, Mr. Cobbett, we are certain, was too honourable in his nature to have denied it. He would not so repeatedly have asserted that he owed nothing to him who had stepped forward to his assistance in the hour of need; nor would he have refused to give up his last shilling towards repaying him, had he indeed considered it as a just debt. We will however, conclude this painful subject. Poor Cobbett is now gathered to the quiet grave of his fathers; and Sir Francis, we are sure, possesses too much good feeling to remember his former friend and companion with any other thought than that of kindness or sincere regret. But to resume the thread of our narrative:—

It was about the year 1806, we believe, that Mr. Cobbett began to ask questions in his Register as to the purposes and prospects of the Reformers. Major Cartwright, who was then the ostensible head of that party, immediately paid him attention, and thus commenced an acquaintance and warm friendship that ended only with the life of the Major. This connection was of the highest service to Mr. Cobbett. The Major was no factious or personal man. Principle, and that good, was his polar star. Much of Cobbett's utility as a political reformer may be justly attributed to the excellent character and example of his friend, Major Cartwright.

From this period to the year 1810 we have nothing of great importance to relate of the subject of our memoir. His Register continued to make its periodical appearance, and most of the articles are distinguished by that extraordinary force, combined with perspicuity of style, which tended so materially to extend the popularity of his writings. Admired by his numerous friends, and justly dreaded by those whom he constantly lashed, he continued his labours without exciting the acknowledged attention of the Government till the 24th of March 1810, when there appeared in his Weekly Register a letter inscribed: "*Sir Francis Burdett to his constituents, denying the power of the House of Commons to imprison the People of England;*" accompanied by the argument with which he had endeavoured to convince the gentlemen of the House of Commons, that their acts, in the case of Mr. Gale Jones,

were illegal; this laid the case before them, he said, in a more full and connected way, than could possibly be done by parliamentary reporters.

This publication of Mr. Cobbett's was brought under the notice of the House of Commons, on the 26th of March, by Mr. (now Sir Thomas) Lethbridge, at whose desire the question was put by the Speaker to Sir Francis Burdett, whether he acknowledged himself to be the author? Sir Francis having answered in the affirmative, Mr. Lethbridge gave notice of a motion on the subject.

Next day, in consequence of this notice, Mr. Lethbridge rose, with a degree of pain and embarrassment, which, he declared he had never felt before, to make a complaint against one of the United Commons of Great Britain and Ireland, who, in his opinion, had violated the privileges of that House. He did not, he said, mean to enter upon the subject itself, but only to lay on the table the document which the honourable Baronet, who was the object of the motion he had to make, had admitted to have been published by his authority. For the purpose of saving the time of the House, he had marked certain passages in that document, which, in his opinion, more particularly justified him in the charge which he had preferred against the honourable Baronet. Mr. Lethbridge then gave in at the table "*Cobbett's Weekly Register*" of Saturday, the 24th of March 1810; and Sir Francis Burdett's papers were read by the Clerk.

Amongst the most offensive and obnoxious passages pointed out by Mr. Lethbridge in Sir Francis Burdett's Letter and Argument, were the following:—

"The House of Commons having passed a vote, which amounts to a declaration, that an order of theirs is to be of more importance than *Magna Charta* and the laws of the land, I think it my duty to lay my sentiments thereon before my constituents, whose character as freemen, and even whose personal safety depend, in a great degree, on the decision of this question,—a question of no less importance than this—whether our liberty be still to be secured by the laws of our forefathers, or be to lie at the absolute mercy of a part of our fellow subjects,—collected together by means which it is not necessary for me to describe.

"If they (the House of Commons) have the absolute power of imprisoning and releasing, why may they not send their prisoner to York gaol as well as to a gaol in London? Why not confine men in solitary cells, or load them with chains and bolts? They have not gone these lengths yet. But what is to restrain them, if they are to be the sole judges of the extent of their own powers without control, and without leaving the parties whom they choose to punish any mode of appeal,—any means of redress?

"By proceeding thus, they may have exercised a jurisdiction not vested in them; a jurisdiction beyond the limits of King, Lords, and Commons, while Magna Charta remains unrepealed; and repealed it never can be till England shall have found her grave in the corruption of the House of Commons.

"But no wonder, when they have so entirely departed from the ends of their institution, as was offered to be proved by Mr. Maddocks, and acknowledged by themselves, on the never-to-be-forgotten morning of the 11th of May 1809, when, from being the lower or inferior, (for it is the same sense, one being an English, the other a Latin word,) branch of the Legislature, they have become, by burgage-tenure, the proprietors of the whole representation, and in that capacity, inflated with their high-flown fanciful ideas of majesty, and tricked out in the trappings of royalty, think privilege and protection beneath their dignity, assume the sword of prerogative, and lord it equally over the King and the people."

In reply to the charges that had thus been brought against him, Sir Francis Burdett said, that in writing the address to his constituents, and the arguments that accompanied it, he had no idea that he was infringing any privilege of that House. Was it to be supposed that the simple act of arguing on the powers of the Commons was a crime? Would not the House endure even an abstract doubt of these powers? He was willing to abide by the fact and argument of what he had written. He would stand the issue. But if it was the pleasure of the House that he should now withdraw, he was ready to withdraw.

The Speaker stated this was, in similar cases, the uni-

form practice. Sir Francis Burdett accordingly withdrew ; after which Mr. Lethbridge proposed the two following resolutions, for the adoption of the House.

“1st.—Resolved that the letter signed Francis Burdett, and the further argument which was published in the paper called “Cobbett’s Weekly Register”, on the 24th of this instant, is a libellous and scandalous paper reflecting upon the just rights and privileges of this House.

“2nd.—That Sir Francis Burdett, who suffered the above articles to be printed with his name, and by his authority, has been guilty of a violation of the privileges of this House.”

The motion was seconded by Mr. Blatchford. Mr. Sheridan concluded a long harangue with moving, “that the committee of privileges should resume its sitting on that day se’nnight, and that the paper complained of should be referred to it.” Some debate about the necessity of moving this, in point of form, as an amendment on the original question, was superseded by a motion made by Mr. Brand, as an amendment to the original question, that the debate be adjourned till the next day se’nnight. A conversation ensued on this question of adjournment, in which most of the speakers entered into the merits of the original question.

Upon the question being put it was adjourned till the following day se’nnight, the 5th of April, on which day the resumed debate on which the main points on both sides had been already discussed, was continued till half after seven o’clock on Friday morning ; and in the course of which, speeches were made by no less than thirty members. The resolutions, however, moved by Mr. Lethbridge, were eventually agreed to without a division ; after which a motion was made by Sir Robert Salisbury for the commitment of Sir Francis Burdett to the Tower, but this not meeting with the entire approbation of the House, an amendment was proposed that Sir Francis Burdett, be reprimanded in his place : upon which the House divided, when there appeared—for the original motion 190 ;—against it 152 ;—majority in favour of the commitment of Sir Francis Burdett—38.

In consequence of this vote for the commitment of Sir Francis Burdett, the Speaker, on the same morning, at

half past eight o'clock, signed the warrants for commitment, and immediately delivered them to the serjeant-at-arms, to be carried into effect, if possible, by ten o'clock that morning. Sir Francis resisted the authority of those warrants, and, upon being subsequently taken prisoner, a very serious riot occurred in which several lives were lost. The details, however, of this singular affair do not belong to our present narrative; we have mentioned the circumstance only from the fact of the letter of Sir Francis Burdett, having originally appeared in Cobbett's Register, from which it was copied on the following Monday into the Times newspaper.

At this period, (1810), Mr. Cobbett had reached power enough in opposition to Perceval's administration, to bring down the official persecution of the Attorney General (Sir Vicary Gibbs) on his head. For expressing his utter abhorrence of the flogging of English Local-Militia men, in the Isle of Ely, under a guard of German soldiers, he was indicted by *ex officio* information, and subjected to all the annoyances and heavy expenses consequent upon such proceedings. Thus goaded by his enemies, and holding a gaol in the greatest dread, together with a natural alarm for a happy family, young and increasing, he began to conceive an idea of surrendering his literary powers as a sacrifice to Perceval. But that minister, waspish, as he ever was, not choosing to accept the offer, Mr. Cobbett was once more put on his mettle, and he determined to brave and suffer the judgment, whatever it might be, of the Court of King's Bench. This trial was important in its results, and so demonstrative is it of the vindictive feelings of his enemies, that we shall give it at considerable length; for, since five and twenty years have now elapsed, few persons know more of the subject than from mere hear-say, and we doubt not that a full report will prove acceptable to all our readers.

On Friday, June 15th, 1810, this ministerial prosecution was tried in the Court of King's Bench before Lord Ellenborough, who came into the court at nine o'clock, accompanied by Lord Lauderdale, and Mr. Tierney. The pannel being called over, the following persons were sworn of the jury:—Thomas Rhodes, Hampstead Road

John Davis, Southampton Place, ditto; James Ellis, Tottenham Court Road; John Richards, Bayswater; Thomas Marsham, Baker Street; Robert Heathcote, High Street, Mary-le-bone; John Maude, York Place, ditto; George Bagster, Church Terrace, Pancras; Thomas Taylor, Red Lion Square; David Deane, 110, St. John Street; William Palmer, Upper Street, Islington; Joseph West, (talesman) was about to be sworn, but

Mr. Cobbett objected to him, and he was withdrawn without assigning any reason, on the consent of the Attorney-General. Henry Faver, a talesman, was then sworn, and made up the twelve.

The Attorney-General (Gibbs) then opened the case on behalf of the crown. In 1808, Lord Castlereagh brought in his Bill by which the local militia might be called out for twenty-eight days, though they had only been called out twenty days. When the Cambridgeshire militia was called out, some disaffected persons in the Isle of Ely caused them to mutiny, and it was found necessary to call in the military in the neighbourhood, and five of the ringleaders were sentenced to receive 500 lashes, part only of which they received. The *German legion*, who were thus called in, was composed of a body of brave men, who, when Hanover was overcome, quitted their country, and entering into his Majesty's service, had conducted themselves with bravery, and it was no disparagement to the British army to say, that the German legion even shared the glory with them. At the battle of Talavera, the German legion took three standards. No troops had ever conducted themselves in a more quiet, orderly, or sober manner, and he could not find that any complaint had been made against them. Mr. Wardle, in a motion in the House of Commons, had proposed to disband the German legion, against which Mr. Huskisson offered sufficient reasons. A paragraph soon after appeared in the *Courier*, which he would read:—

“The mutiny amongst the local militia, which broke out at Ely, was *fortunately* suppressed on Wednesday, by the arrival of four squadrons of the German legion cavalry from Bury, under the command of General Auckland. Five of the ringleaders were tried by a court-martial, and sentenced to receive 500 lashes each, part of which punishment they received on Wednesday, and a part was remitted.

A stoppage for their Knapsacks was the ground of complaint that excited this *mutinous* spirit; which occasioned the men to surround their officers, and demand what *they deemed* their arrears. The first division of the German legion halted yesterday at Newmarket, on their return to Bury." [*Courier Newspaper, Saturday, June 24, 1809.*]

With this paragraph as a text to a sermon, had Mr. Cobbett headed the article complained of in the *Weekly Register*.

The Attorney-General then read the alleged libel:—

“LOCAL MILITIA AND GERMAN LEGION.

“ See the motto, English reader ! See the motto, and then do pray recollect all that has been said about the way in which Buonaparte raises soldiers.—Well done, Lord Castlereagh ! This is just what it was thought your plan would produce. Well said, Mr. Huskisson ; It really was not without reason that you dwelt with so much earnestness upon the great utility of the foreign troops, whom Mr. Wardle appeared to think of no utility at all. Poor gentleman ! he little imagined how a great genius might find useful employment for such troops. He little imagined that they might be made the means of compelling Englishmen to submit to that sort of *discipline*, which is so conducive to the producing in them a disposition to defend the country, at the risk of their lives. Let Mr. Wardle look at my motto, and then say, whether the German soldiers are of *no use*—*Five hundred lashes each!*—Aye, that is right ! Flog them ; flog them ! they deserve it, and a great deal more. They deserve a flogging at every meal-time. Lash them daily ; lash them daily. What ! shall the rascals dare to *mutiny*, and that too when the German legion is so near at hand ! They deserve it. O yes ; they merit a double tailed cat. Base dogs ! What ! mutiny for the sake of the price of a *knapsack* ! Lash them ! flog them ! Base rascals ! Mutiny for the price of a goat's skin !—And then, upon the appearance of the *German soldiers*, they take a flogging as quietly as so many trunks of trees !—I do not know what sort of a place Ely is ; but really I should like to know how the inhabitants looked one

—another in the face, while this scene was exhibiting in their town. I should like to have been able to see their faces, and to hear their observations to each other at the time. This occurrence at home will, one would hope, teach *the loyal* a little caution in speaking of the means which Napoleon employs (or rather which they say he employs) in order to get together and to discipline his conscripts. There is scarcely any one of these loyal persons, who has not at various times, cited the *hand-cuffings* and other means of force, said to be used in drawing out the young men of France; there is scarcely one of the loyal, who has not cited these means as a proof, a complete proof, that the people of France *hate Napoleon and his government, assist with reluctance in his wars, and would fain see another revolution*. I hope, I say, that the loyal will, hereafter, be more cautious in drawing such conclusions, now that they see that our ‘gallant defenders’ not only require physical restraints, in certain cases, but even a little blood drawn from their backs, and that too, with the aid and assistance of German troops! Yes; I hope the loyal will be a little more upon their guard in drawing conclusions against Napoleon’s popularity.—At any rate, every time they do, in future, burst out in ex-
 cerations against the French for suffering themselves to be ‘chained together and forced at the point of the bayonet to do military duty,’ I shall just republish the passage which I have taken for the motto to the present sheet. I have *heard* of some other pretty little things of the same sort; but I rather choose to take my instance, (and a very complete one it is) from a public print notoriously under the sway of the ministry.”

The jury, (continued the Attorney-General) would observe with how much reproach Mr. Cobbett mentioned the word “loyal.” He would not suffer it to be believed that Napoleon would use such means to raise an army. He not only rendered it a vehicle of attack on this country, but as a defence of the Emperor of France; he would not permit the country to believe the tyranny of Buonaparte. So that the author meant to represent that the treatment of ministers was as tyrannical as the chaining together the conscripts of France. The object of the libel was to give to all men

a distaste to the German Legion, into which some must enter, and to persuade people that the tyranny of the measure of the local militia, was greater than that of Buonaparte. For these reasons he (the Attorney-General) felt himself called upon to bring the publication before a jury. Whatever the author had to allege, he would be patiently heard. He had attentively considered the paper in question, and could give it no character but that which he had described it to be.

The Attorney-General then went on to state, that two persons of the names of Bagshaw and Budd, had been included in the prosecution as printer and publisher of the paper. They had, however, suffered judgment to go by default; and the only thing that now remained to be done was to prove that the paper was published as stated, and that William Cobbett was the author.

A Mr. Harvey was then called to prove the fact of the publication. The Defendant, however, signified his admission that he was the sole proprietor of the "Political Register," and author of the part in question, with the exception of the matter taken from the *Courier*.

The Attorney-General then called a witness to prove that there was such a body of troops as the German Legion in the British service: but on the Defendant's admission of the fact, the examination did not proceed.

The libel was then handed up to the proper officer of the court, and read; at the conclusion of which

Mr. Cobbett, who defended his cause in person, commenced by declaring to the jury, that no part of the delay in the prosecution was owing, as had been stated, to him. He was anxious to have so painful and weighty a matter settled as the law would direct, and as soon as would be permitted by the law. He would not now take up the valuable time of the court by any preliminary details, but proceed at once to the act of delinquency with which he stood charged. It was not his intention to dilate upon the formidable apparatus of charges which the King's Attorney-General had set in motion against him; he (the Defendant) would pass by all this thunder of technical phrases and harsh, legal, overpowering accusations, which were, after all, little more than the customary declamation of the law officers

of the Crown. But he (Mr. Cobbett) must intrude on their patience for a moment, to read a passage from a writer of great eminence in his day—Sir John Hall—as it particularly applied to the species of fierce and indiscriminate attack always made by an Attorney-General. Sir John Hall, in speaking of that officer, says, “In Spain, the Inquisition, when they wanted to burn heretics, clothed the innocent Protestants in *san benitos*, a dress painted all over with devils and flames, and monsters of all kinds; so that the people, seeing them all alike covered with this terrible disguise, thought them all equally guilty, and lost their natural compassion for the sufferings of these poor men. It was thus that Attorney-Generals heaped the same ill-language on all persons alike; but still there was a distinction between guilt and innocence, and the innocent must be still protected by the law.”

I wish, gentlemen, said Mr. Cobbett, that the intention which was in my mind at the time of writing that paper may be the thing tried, for my intention would fully acquit me. You are not to place too solemn a reliance on the judgment of the Attorney General—he is not infallible; a late case proved this. A gentleman of my profession, was arraigned before the court for a crime much more serious than that which he ventures to impute to me; a crime of no less magnitude than desiring the death of the king, and seeing his place filled up by a successor. Yet, with all the labour of eloquence which the Attorney General expended upon that occasion a British jury found the defendant—not guilty. Gentlemen, I believe,—I firmly and conscientiously believe,—that, in the whole world, there is not a man so much calumniated as myself. The most atrocious and false calumnies have been spread concerning me and my motives, and my life. I would not say this as of certain knowledge, nor as intending to say a harsh thing; but I believe that those calumnies have found much of their propagation from the influence of the ministry. I complain of those calumnies, because, if you believe them, you must condemn me—I must deserve punishment. His lordship will permit me to mention one or two of those facts. You have seen, in the streets, posted up, papers

pretending to give an account of my life. I am in those accused, (by a person whom I can prove to have had a pension of two hundred pounds a year, till Lord Sidmouth struck him off,) of a transaction that ought to have degraded any man. It states that I, having received from Government four thousand pounds for spreading a certain pamphlet through the country, diverted the money to my own purposes, and refused to give any further account of it up to this day. On this point I have written to Lord Sidmouth, and have received his answer.

Mr. Cobbett then read his letter, requesting a public answer to the calumny. Lord Sidmouth's answer was as follows:

"Sir, I have but just received your letter, requesting my declaration as to your having received £4,000 for the alledged purposes. I think it only due to you, to answer you as soon as possible, and to say, that the transaction never had any existence.

"SIDMOUTH."

"After having done away with this charge, I must refute another. I have been stigmatized as having been frequently liable to prosecutions like the present. Gentlemen, I once before stood in this court, not on my own account, but on that of a learned judge. I published his letter, and the hand discovered the author. But so little was any thing in the shape of guilt connected with that conviction, that the learned judge immediately afterwards obtained a pension of £1,200 a year. I may say further, and say it as some proof of the proper feeling of Mr. Perceval, since he has ceased to be Attorney-General, that, in his capacity as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he has paid over £800 to that judge, which were kept back, as accruing during the time of the prosecution. I must answer another charge; for, gentlemen, I have been the most calumniated man in the world. I have been talked of as a convicted libeller in America. This is the very excess of stupid calumny. I was prosecuted for a libel on the Spanish Minister. But for what? For his attempts to raise an insurrection in Canada; for his detected attempt to poison the minds of the soldiery in Quebec; for his scattering money through the country to detach the Canadians, the subjects of my natural

king, from their allegiance. I attacked him;—I exposed him. For this I was attacked in my turn by a wicked judge. A wicked judge was found; who took it upon him to hurt and harass me for doing what was only my duty. That wicked judge brought a prosecution upon me; seven special juries were struck, before they could find the one that would be fit for their purpose. I was subjected to the most galling oppression, yet I sustained it firmly: I lost in this life of difficulty and struggle, the little property which I had acquired through difficulties of no common order. I finally left the country; and left it because I could serve the cause of my lawful king no longer. Yet this, this was what an Attorney-General *ripped up* against me, and blazoned me out as a convicted libeller in America, as well as in Europe.

“The posted papers to which I have already alluded, dare to speak of me as an oppressor of the poor, and as converting the property and the influence which I may have acquired, into the means of disturbing the country in which I have settled. But this is weak and unworthy; the whole charge is false. It does not become any man to speak in high terms of himself; but I have been no oppressor, no defrauder of the rights of any human being, no insulter of the poor. I have done good according to my measure; I have not been indolent in promoting the industry, and interests, and peace of Hampshire. I am frequently consulted on matters relating to the country, and I never refuse advice or assistance. I must give one instance, some time since: The general commanding the district wished to have a road made through a particular part of the country. His *aid-de-camp* was sent among the gentlemen of Hampshire to make inquiries, and get whatever assistance he could for the work. They all directed him to me: I was not suspected of disloyalty; I gave my assistance, and it was effectual. The road was laid out. I spent a considerable part of the winter in town, attending the progress of the Bill through Parliament, and the road is now in a state of great forwardness.

“Having now, as I trust, removed from your minds any unfavourable impressions which such calumnies must naturally produce, I come now to consider the

matter upon which I am charged—I am charged, and the whole criminality of the charge rests in this,—with having written this paper with an intention hostile to the King, and subversive of his government; or, in other words, with meaning to do some injury to my country. If you find me guilty of the charge, you must find me guilty in manner and form as alleged against me. The wicked intention is necessary to constitute the crime I am charged with; and it is upon this point alone that the whole merit of the case depends. The Attorney-General has told you most erroneously, that I availed myself of the circumstance of living in the country to put off the trial; or, in other words, to evade justice. In this statement the Attorney-General has been greatly in error; my attorneys, who are here present, know that this is not the fact, but that, on the contrary, I came to town at considerable inconvenience to myself, and waited for my trial, but it was not brought on. I was quite ready for my trial before; and it would have been more convenient to me that it had been brought on at once and disposed of. The circumstance of the delay did certainly require some explanation from the Attorney-General; but that explanation is not to be found from the circumstance of my living in the country. It was certainly a very unpleasant thing to me to be proclaimed throughout the country as a criminal, over whom a prosecution was depending. To a man like me, who has a large family, with some children just old enough to be alarmed, and a wife in a situation in which alarms are often dangerous, it was most particularly unpleasant to have this prosecution long hanging over my head, like a sword suspended by a single thread. My prosecutors got an order for me to come up to town to be tried; and when I came up to town to be tried; and when I came up for that purpose I was told to go back again about my business.

“The Attorney-General has made great use of the word *loyal*, which he says I am in the habit of using as a term of reproach. Now my own property and all my interests and prospects, are so connected with the security of the country, that it would be strange indeed if I were to use the word *loyalty* as a term of reproach.

If any of you, gentlemen, are in the habit of reading my paper, you must know that I do not mean to consider loyalty as a subject of reproach. The Attorney-General must know it, and does know it. Every man of common understanding that reads the article, will see that the word *loyal* is used in an ironical sense. Every one knows that there are a set of men who wish to claim an exclusive loyalty. Such men for example as John Bowles, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Villiers, and others of that description, who pretend to an extraordinary degree of loyalty, and who endeavour to cry down as disloyal and disaffected men, all who will venture to say any thing tending to remove the present administration from their places. It was to these pretended loyalists that I applied the term, and the Attorney-General must know my meaning well enough. When, in another part of my paper, I say, 'flog them, flog them,' then he finds out that I am speaking ironically; but in the other expression, he wishes it to be supposed that I was in downright earnest. Now it is not fair of him to pick and choose in this manner. He should either have considered both these expressions as serious, or both ironical. I really, gentlemen, do not want to impress you with a belief that I meant any thing else by the words I used, than what I really did mean. I meant to apply the term *loyal* in an ironical sense, to those hypocrites and flatterers who pretend to be loyal, but who are really the greatest enemies of the country. There is another term that he takes notice of, 'the King's friends.' This is a phrase which every body who has either read my paper, or any other paper that is published, must understand. It is not applied to those who really are the best friends to the king and country, but to that party which choose to call themselves exclusively the King's friends, and would represent all other men as his enemies. Neither the terms *King's friends* nor *loyal* can ever be used as a term of reproach, except when applied ironically to those hypocrites and flatterers who claim exclusive loyalty and attachment to the King's person. In this paper which I am charged with, as being a libel, I have not mentioned the King's name, nor that of any of his family, nor anything respecting the royal authority.

This article, which was satirical, hyperbolical, and perhaps clumsily and badly written (certainly written in a great hurry) did not reflect upon His Majesty, but upon his ministers.—Ministers have, however, a way of construing every attack upon them, as an attack upon the King. When I say, ‘Well done Lord Castlereagh, his lordship would say ‘this is not meant for me but for the King.’ Lord Castlereagh would certainly never admit that any thing which spoke of cruelty or flogging, could be meant for him. They might as well say, that if a minister was walking through the streets, and had mud thrown at him, that it was the King himself that was pelted. I certainly did not invent or devise those facts upon which I commented; and if upon those facts my comment was somewhat angry and hasty, it cannot be inferred from thence that it was my intention to overturn the government, or do any injury to my country. The learned Judge Blackstone, (from whom every lawyer in the court, and even the learned Judge had imbibed their first lessons of law) in speaking of the forms of trial, states, that the trial by information, *ex officio*, was only to be used in cases of such enormity, that the least delay would endanger His Majesty’s government; or, where His Majesty was molested, or affronted in the exercise of his royal functions. In all other cases, the subject is entitled to the double shield of a grand jury, as well as of a petit jury. Did this paper endanger His Majesty’s government? Was this a case that would not bear a moment’s delay?—or, if it were so, why was it delayed for a whole twelvemonth? If, instead of calling me a person disaffected to His Majesty, they had said that I disliked Lord Castlereagh, and that I had intended and devised to bring Lord Castlereagh into dislike, I would not have known what defence to have made to such a charge; and I believe that I must have admitted it to be true. It was but a short time ago that this Lord Castlereagh complained in the House of the difficulty of bringing libellers to punishment:”—

LORD ELLENBOROUGH, interrupting—“I must interrupt you. You must not make your defence a means of traduction. The particular crime that you are charged with, of publishing the paper which has been read,

cannot be defended by charging other men with doctrines delivered in Parliament."

Mr. CORBETT continued:—"I shall return, then, to the forced construction which I say the Attorney-General has put upon my words. In that paper I was ridiculing the measure of the Local Militia, introduced by Lord Castlereagh. When I set down 'Aye, the rascals, flog them, flog them,' no man would suppose that I was speaking seriously. The Attorney-General says, that I meant to say, that Buonaparte behaved with less cruelty to his conscripts than our government behaves to the Local Militia. Now my meaning, in referring to Buonaparte on this occasion, was merely to sting them with this observation, that it would not be prudent for them to be always inveighing against the cruelty of Buonaparte, unless they would themselves leave off such practices as these. As to making some observations upon the treatment of soldiers, I will now ask, are we never to be allowed, upon any occasion, to say that soldiers have been cruelly treated? If one of us was in a garrison town, and saw a soldier flogged to death, (which I hope will never occur since the case of Governor Wall,) would it be criminal to say anything, or to write anything upon the subject? What! is every man who puts on a red coat, to be from that moment deserted by all the world; and is no tongue, or no pen, ever to stir in his defence? Who were those local militiamen? The greater part were then young fellows, probably in smock-frocks, just taken from the plough, and ignorant of that subordination that is practised in the army. I allow, that against a serious mutiny severe measures may be necessary; but then by mutiny I understand taking up arms, and forcibly and violently resisting the officers in the execution of their military duties. I do not think a mere discontent and squabble in a corps about the marching guinea, should either receive the name or punishment of mutiny. I, and other people, told Lord Castlereagh from the beginning, that it would come to this; that these local militiamen would be made just soldiers enough to be disinclined to return to labour, and that they would be so much of labourers as never to be made effective soldiers. But it

is not always considered criminal to speak of our soldiers having received cruel treatment. I shall now read to you many extracts of speeches delivered in Parliament of the British army in Walcheren. The sentiments which I shall now read to you are much stronger than anything contained in the paper for which I am prosecuted. I shall first read the words of Lord Grenville;

LORD ELLENBOROUGH.—“Mr. Cobbett, I must prevent this; I cannot allow speeches stated to have been spoken in Parliament on other matters, to be read to the jury. If you have any extracts from other sources, which you think applicable to your case, you may read them.”

MR. COBBETT.—“Well then, it will suffice for me to say shortly, that there is no degree of cruelty, hardship, and oppression, which has not been charged to those who conducted the Walcheren expedition. When people speak against the ill-treatment of our soldiers, the fair and natural presumption is, not that they want to overturn the government, but that they want those evils, of which they complain, to be remedied in future. When Mr. Whitbread said, a few days ago, that as much cruelty now prevails in the Duke of Cumberland's regiment as there ever did, and that it was in that regiment only that the practice of picketing was continued, did any body believe that Mr. Whitbread really meant to excite a mutiny? No! every body must be convinced that the thing was mentioned only that the evil might be corrected.—

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL complained to his lordship of the impropriety of thus quoting speeches made in Parliament.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH again informed Mr. Cobbett, that it was improper to quote speeches made in the imperial chambers of Parliament. They could not be brought into consideration upon the present occasion.

MR. COBBETT resumed :—“It appeared to me that the reasonable conclusion which is formed in other cases, and which ought also to be formed in mine, is, that a person generally complains, not with the view of doing an injury to his country by the complaint, but with a view of having that altered of which he complains. A

men may be mistaken in the subject of which he complains, and yet may act without any of those bad intentions which have been imputed to me. There is, indeed, a circumstance respecting my paper, which shows that it could not have been my intention to produce any mutiny.—My paper cannot get among the soldiers but by mere accident. Its circulation is principally among those classes who are best informed and most capable of understanding its real meaning and object. If one wanted to do mischief in the army, it is not by such papers as mine, but by placards and handbills, that soldiers would easiest be worked upon.

“I do conceive, however, that there are cases in which much real mischief might be done by publications in newspapers. For example, if a fleet were upon the point of sailing on a particular destination, and anybody was to publish that the transports were altogether deficient for the accommodation of the troops, and that there was no manner of attention to their comforts or their health, such publication might do considerable mischief, and therefore be deserving of punishment: In point of fact, such a publication had taken place in a morning paper; and it appeared to the last Attorney-General (Sir A. Pigot) as so very dangerous that he filed an information *ex officio* upon it, and yet the present Attorney-General did not conceive it in that light, and abandoned it. (Mr. Cobbett then read an extract from the Morning Post, which contained the article to which he alluded.) I think that the Attorney-General acted rightly in abandoning this prosecution; but I think that upon the same principle he should also have given up the present prosecution. In the last trial for a libel upon an information, the Attorney-General laid down very different doctrines. He said “that it was not his practice to prosecute men for expressing their sentiments even with some degree of warmth and indiscretion in the discussion of public affairs; and that when such warmth was only displayed in arraigning the conduct of ministers, or in discussing what belonged to the important interests of this country, or the happiness of mankind, no notice of this sort was ever taken of it.” It is a thing perfectly well known, that, in cases of this

sort, words should be judged of by the intention rather than by the literal construction. Lord Erskine expressed this in a striking manner, when he was pleading as an advocate for a defendant in a case of this nature in this very court, (at that time the trial of Hastings had been going on for a considerable length of time, and the court erected for the trial obstructed the avenues to the Court of King's Bench). "What!" said Mr. Erskine, "if, when I am making my way through dismal passages to this *hole in the wall*, I should mutter to myself, and in an ill humour wish that the roof of the building would fall upon king, lords, and commons, upon prosecutors and defendants? Such a wish might show ill temper; if I expressed it aloud it would be indecorous; but if any one wished to take it up seriously, and complained of me to the House of Commons, how would the House take it up, or how would the person who brought so frivolous a complaint be treated?"

"I do not, however, pretend to say, that I was in such a passion at the time of my writing this article as not to know what I was about; but still I say, that it was an article written in a hurry, and without much time for reflection. The article in the "Courier" was dated the 24th of June, and the comment on it appeared in my paper on the 1st of July. As it was necessary to send to and from Botley in the interval, no great time was left for deliberation. If every expression was to be strained as the Attorney-General has attempted to strain the expressions in this article, no person could be safe. Half the language of mankind is figurative, and nothing can be more unfair than construing according to the letter, that which is meant as irony. Men, in common conversation, often use expressions that are hyperbolical, and those expressions are never understood literally. If a different construction were to be put on everything which appears in print, the press must be either wholly silent, or confine itself to the praises of administration.

I perhaps should have said nothing about the German troops, if it were not for the high eulogium that the Attorney-General has been pleased to bestow upon

them. I am free to confess, that I was always adverse to the employment of German troops in this country; and it did particularly move my indignation, that German troops should be brought to witness the punishment of the local militiamen of this country, who, as I said before, were most of them young fellows, just taken from the plough, and unacquainted with the forms of military discipline. The introduction of foreign troops into this country was always warmly objected to by our ancestors; and in their objection and dislike of them I perfectly agree. This objection, then, does not proceed from any jacobinical aversion to His Majesty, but it is an objection which has been justly entertained at all times by those who had the best British feelings. So early as the year 1628, the House of Commons presented a petition to Charles I. in which they complained of bringing German horse into this country. The bringing in of strangers has been injurious to every country, but to England it has often been fatal. They held it to be far beneath the character, and the bold hearts of Englishmen, to think it necessary to bring over foreigners for their protection.

"There is another authentic instance of the dislike of our ancestors to the introduction of foreign troops. In the year 1692, very shortly after the Revolution, there was a debate in the House of Commons upon the introduction of foreigners, and their commanding Englishmen. Sir Peter Collier, in the course of his speech said, 'that Englishmen bore a love to their own country which it is impossible that strangers can feel. Foreigners could not have the same affection for this country as the men who had been born in it.' He concluded his speech by moving that none but natives should command Englishmen.

"This motion, although very much against the inclination of King William the Third, who was naturally very much attached to his foreign troops, was agreed to, and became a law. Notwithstanding this, there are now no less than four or five German generals either commanding districts, or on the staff. Since the year 1806, this force has increased from twenty-four to thirty-nine

thousand men (including 5,000 provincial troops in Nova Scotia, &c.) There are four German Lieutenant-Generals, four Major Generals, and nineteen Colonels, many of whom have the rank of Brigadier-General, and who commanded not only Englishmen but English officers. There are not only many Germans in high command in this country, but there are Frenchmen also. There is one Frenchman of the name of Montalembert, who is on the staff in Sussex! and I understood that there are, or there were, two of them lately intrusted as overseers of a dock-yard in Wales. Although the law says that no foreigner shall be employed in any office of trust, civil or military, yet the whole country is full of these foreigners so employed in places of trust. The two acts which authorized the introduction of these German troops into this country were not enacting statutes, but merely acts of indemnity. The law of the country was such as was agreed to at the bargain made at the Revolution by the Act of Settlement, and that act prohibited foreigners from holding those situations of trust. There are now no less than 773 of those German officers; and if we take in all the foreigners who hold offices of trust in our military service,—contrary to the law,—there are no less than 1,503.

“The Attorney-General has mis-stated the fact, when he represents those German Legions as entirely or principally composed of Hanoverians who have enlisted from attachment to their legitimate Sovereign. It is a very small part indeed, not more than four or five thousand, who enlisted in Hanover; the great bulk of them is composed of persons enlisted in the prisons of Spain and England. I have heard that a considerable number of them were enlisted from the prisoners of Dupont’s army. When an army of foreigners is raked together in this manner; when their officers command over Englishmen; and, when part of them are brought to witness the flogging of our local militiamen, how can I avoid feeling the greatest indignation? and, feeling (as I must do) this indignation, why should I not be permitted to express it? And, if I do express this indignation which I feel, in somewhat of angry language, are you, upon

that account, to presume that I am guilty of deliberately wishing and contriving to subvert the government of this country ?

“The Attorney-General talks of the gallant conduct of these troops at the battle of Talavera. Now I have heard that they behaved very badly at Talavera ; and, if I had expected the Attorney-General to make this assertion, I should certainly have brought in my pocket a letter which I think will warrant me in saying that they behaved badly there. The letter is from an officer of the Horse Artillery (Lieutenant Frederick Read) and directed to a person in a high situation in this country. Among other things it states, “that if it was not for the timely arrival of the 29th regiment, their whole brigade would have been taken, in consequence of the cowardly conduct of the German Legion.” It is not merely from this letter that I derive my information on this subject ; but I have spoken with many officers from Spain, who passed through my neighbourhood in the country. and whom I invited to take up their quarters at Botley. All their officers agreed in stating that the Germans had behaved very ill. One of their officers, indeed, planted the standard close to the enemy, and endeavoured to rally them, but it was impossible. The Attorney-General must have been much misled when he made this statement ; and, indeed, I do not wonder at it when I recollect, that, since leaving Portugal, the officers have not been allowed to write, or even to speak about what takes place in that part of the world. The Attorney-General appeals to the testimony of all in whose neighbourhood these Germans have been quartered, to say what well conducted troops they are. Now, as to what I know of them, their character is directly the reverse. I shall first speak of the regiment commanded by the Duke of Brunswick ; and in giving their character, I shall first state what was the opinion of the Archduke Charles, respecting this regiment. The Archduke, in a letter to the Duke of Brunswick states, “that it is with great concern that I learn, that the troops under the command of your Highness, in Saxony, have been guilty of such extortions and excesses as to dishonour

the army, render forgotten all the atrocities committed by the French, and dispose the minds of the people against the common cause. I have therefore given orders to General Kienmayer, commanding in Saxony, to see that the most rigorous military discipline be preserved, as long as a corps continues there, which, like that under your command, is composed of people having no country." Such is the character that the regiment of the Duke of Brunswick had in Germany.

"When they came to this country, one of the first places they were sent to was the Isle of Wight. There they committed all manner of violences, enormities, and devastations. They were charged with committing two murders;—I cannot pretend to say they actually did commit them;—but, this I will say, I have seen a letter, stating that the bar of a public-house has been chopped through with their sabres, and the landlord put in the greatest danger of his life, for not supplying them with liquors. In short they were the terror of the whole neighbourhood, who rejoiced most sincerely when they were sent off somewhere else. Nevertheless, I do not pretend to deny, that many of them may be very good men; but yet I have an objection to their being employed in this country, on the ground that our ancestors objected, that they never can participate in the feelings of Englishmen. Their attachments lie not to England but to Germany. It is impossible, from the feelings of human nature, that it should be otherwise. The graves of their fathers and their properties, (if they have any) lie in Germany, and there are their affections also. This is a principle of human nature too strong to be eradicated. If you take a Laplander from his own country and bring him here, he will still suppose that there is something in Lapland superior to anything he sees elsewhere. When Germany shall be completely under the dominion of Buonaparte, if he should ever invade this country, is it German troops that are fit to be sent forward to oppose his armies? I believe in my conscience, that it would be highly dangerous to trust them in such a situation. I believe that the mass of foreign troops,—which ministers are collecting in this country,—will rather serve as the vanguard of Buonaparte's armies—that it will be,—like the Trojan horse, only filled with Germans instead of Greeks! 1

Another instance of the value of those troops was recently displayed at Guadaloupe:—A part of the 60th regiment, who were mostly Germans, ran away from the enemy. The depot of this regiment was established at Lymington, in Hampshire, and they kept the whole neighbourhood in terror and alarm. I certainly have had my eye constantly on those German troops since their first introduction into the country; and, I am convinced that the employment of them is most injurious to the true interests of this country. I allow that my indignation was much excited at their being employed, (as I thought indecently) in witnessing, if not assisting, in the flogging of Englishmen. In my hasty observations upon this subject, there may have been much bad taste, and many things which cannot bear the test of literary criticism, but I trust you will believe there was no bad meaning. My property, the profits of my publications, the very trees of my planting, all depend on the security of the country under the government of His Majesty and his successors; and I must be the greatest *beast* and *fool*, as well as knave and traitor; if I could seriously and deliberately intend the subversion of the government, or to do any injury to the country. I have now nothing more to say, than to thank you, gentlemen of the Jury, and you, my lord, for the attention with which you have been good enough to favour me.

✓ THE ATTORNEY GENERAL then rose to reply, which he did in a speech of very considerable length but very little power. We regret that our space will not allow of its insertion here, but as its object was merely to impress the minds of the jury with the guilt of the defendant, and to reiterate his charges against him, its omission will be of very little consequence. At the conclusion of the Attorney General's address,

LORD ELLENBOROUGH charged the jury to the following effect;—You have been assembled, and are sworn to try an information, filed by his Majesty's Attorney General, against William Cobbett, charging him with being the author of a libel, intending to injure the King's military service, and to represent that certain soldiers in the Local Militia were treated with oppression. This is the substance of the charge and mischief; and the question is whether the mischief is justly ascribable to the libel in question, and whether it be of that noxious tendency.

The Defendant has said in the course of his defence, that he has been the object of much calumny. Whether he has been so or no, I know not; but I am quite sure you will divest your mind of every prejudice against the Defendant, on account of either his actual or supposed conduct, and consider him only upon the demerit imputed to him by this publication. The publication took its rise in a passage of the *Courier*, which the Defendant took for his motto. [Lord Ellenborough here read the passage.] It appears by this that the soldiers had actually been tried by a Court Martial for mutiny; but the Defendant has stated this to have amounted, in his conception, merely to a squabble between officers and soldiers, about a marching guinea. But how this can be construed to be other than a mutiny, and that of the most dangerous sort, exceeds my comprehension. [Lord Ellenborough then read the libel as far as the words, 'it really was not without reason that you dwelt with so much earnestness upon the great utility of the foreign troops, whom Mr. Wardle appeared to think of no utility at all.'] Although the introduction of foreign troops is certainly sanctioned by law, yet every individual has a right to suggest an alteration in that law, provided that suggestion be made in temperate and qualified terms; he may address himself to the sober reason of his country, that mischief will result from present measures; and endeavour, through the people, to impress the Parliament with the necessity of their being changed. I am sure that if such a discussion had been brought before a jury, you would have been no more inclined to construe it, than any judge in the situation which I unworthily fill, would be to recommend you so to construe it—a libel. But, gentlemen, it is for you to consider whether this publication has a bad intention;—an intention is principally to be looked at by a fair consideration of terms. If intention be to be judged otherwise, a Defendant would have nothing to do, upon all occasions but to say "my mind was innocent, but my pen slipped: the libel was unguarded,—acquit me." But this is not one random expression; there is a continuity of the same thought; and, can you infer from it any purposes but one?

The libel proceeds:—"Poor Gentleman! he little imagined how a great genius might find employment for

such troops. Let Mr. Wardle look at my motto, and then say whether the German soldiers are of no use." The "employment" here talked of must have been that of chastising the mutineers; and the words "useful employment." are evidently used in an ironical and calumnious sense "He little imagined that they might be made the means of compelling Englishmen to submit to that sort of discipline which is so conducive to the producing in them a disposition to defend the country at the risk of their lives." This is partly charge and partly sneer. I was at first doubtful as to the meaning of the former part of it; and attended to what was said on both sides, leaning, if at all, to that of the Defendant, who appeared here as his own defender. But the words of his defence leave no doubt as to his meaning; for, in the course of it, you remember him to have said "I should not have said so much about the German Legion, if they had not been brought to flog the backs of my own countrymen." That part about the "risk of lives," is sneer. Is this not naturally calculated to generate distrust in the army? Has it not the tendency to loosen all the links and ties of military subordination, and to renew mutiny? And if so, it must be understood to have been intended to do so. [Lord Ellenborough then proceeded to read the libel from the words "five hundred" to "trees."] Now, what is the fair meaning of this passage? Is it exhortation, or advice to lay on punishment; or is it not the meaning to reproach the mutineers for submitting to be punished with arms in their hands? [Lord Ellenborough then read from the words: "I do not know," to "at the time."] Does not this appear to convey an imputation against the inhabitants of Ely for suffering the punishment to be inflicted? In what manner can this be palliated or explained? The defendant admitted that it was a passionate article, and written in bad taste. If it were only so, the reprobation and discontinuance of the practice would be enough to require. But can sentiments like these proceed from any other purpose than to hold the government and constitution up to contempt? [Lord Ellenborough then read from the words "this occurrence," to the end.] If this passage alludes to any publication on the nature of the French Government

there is only one that has come under my view by an American of some distinction as a writer; but Mr. Cobbett himself, explains his allusion to have been to Mr. Bowles, Mr. Villiers, and Mr. Hunt. They may or may not have cast these imputations on Buonaparte; the words apply to those persons, whoever they are. But the object of this paragraph, is to say to the English people, "You have not a right to complain of Buonaparte:—look at home." This is the scope of the publication; and was it not its tendency to injure the military service? It is for you to say, whether these are words escaped in haste from a man, otherwise writing temperately, but whose zeal overshot his discretion; or, whether they are the words of a man who wished to dissolve the union of the military upon which, at all times, but most especially at this time, the safety of the kingdom rests. If this latter be the case, surely the defendant will well-meritedly fall under the description of that seditious person which the information charges him with being. In cases like the present, the law requires me to state my opinion to the jury, and when I have held a different opinion to that which I have of the present case, I have not withheld it from the jury.—
I do pronounce this to be a most infamous and seditious libel.

The jury, after consulting together five minutes, without retiring from the box, pronounced the defendant *Guilty*.—The trial lasted from nine o'clock in the morning till half past twelve.

After being thus convicted Mr. Cobbett was not allowed to remain long in suspense as to the degree of punishment to be awarded him. Almost immediately after the trial he received a notice to appear in the Court of King's Bench on the 5th July following, in order to receive judgment.—though, with an understanding that the matter would be postponed till the ensuing Monday.

On the appointed day (July 5) Mr. Cobbett went into the court, with the order defendants, and many of his friends. The four judges were on the bench, and the court was unusually crowded. When the bustle had subsided, the Attorney-General rose, and briefly moved the judgment of the court against William Cobbett, the proprietor, Messrs. Bagshaw and Budd, the publishers; and Mr. Hansard, the printer of the Political Register.

Lord Ellenborough recapitulated the evidence given on the trial, and when this had been concluded, inquired whether the defendants had any affidavits to produce.

Mr. Cobbett replied that he did not intend to offer any to the court.

Affidavits on the parts of Richard Bagshaw, and John Budd were then read. They severally stated, in nearly the same terms, that their connection with Mr. Cobbett, was merely as the vendors of this paper; that they had no peculiar profit on it; and that they merely ordered it as they would have ordered any other, at the desire of their customers. They both stated that they had not read the paper in question, previously to publication, and that they were not acquainted with its libellous tendency. They were married men, with children, and their presence was necessary to their business. They were both advanced in life and infirm, and confinement would be ruinous to them. They had suffered judgment to go by default, and now threw themselves on the mercy of the court, with the stronger hope, as they had never before been prosecuted in any charge of libel.—Affidavits from medical men were read in corroboration of these statements of their health.

Mr. Hansard's affidavit stated, that having purchased the stock-in-trade of a person who had formerly printed Mr. Cobbett's Parliamentary History, he came into the printing of that work. That, in some time after,—about 1805,—Mr. Cobbett having a quarrel with Messrs. Cox and Baylis, his printers, prevailed upon the deponent, with much entreaty, to undertake the printing of the Political Register. That Botley, (Mr. Cobbett's residence,) being 70 miles from London, and the communications from the author coming in late on the Thursday in each week, every thing was required to be done with the utmost expedition, to be ready for publishing in time. That the separate divisions of the work were brought to him in the form, which was called proof-slips; and it was only in this broken and partial way, that he had an opportunity of reading the composition. That though it might have been proper for deponent to inspect the entire work on the morning of publication, yet, that from anxiety to send out the work, and from having no suspicion that it was libellous, he had

omitted that duty. That deponent had no other profit in the Register than the common price of printing, that he had no share, kept no copies, recommended none to buyers, did not provide even paper or stamps, and was altogether unconcerned with the objects which the author might be supposed to have had in view. That this was the first time he had been before the court for an offence of this nature, and that he prayed for their consideration.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH;—Have the defendants any Counsel?

MR. COBBETT;—My lord, after what has already been said on the subject, I have nothing at present to trouble your lordships with, except to say that the defendants had no share whatever in the composition of the Register: and I believe, no opportunity of looking over it before publication. In this I except Mr. Hansard, the printer, but, I here declare, that in my whole intercourse with them, I cannot recollect ever having heard a disloyal sentiment from the lips of one of them. I need not now repeat, that the paragraph, which has been made the foundation of the charge, was not written by me with any evil or libellous intention.

After some further preliminary business, the Attorney-General rose, and, in a speech, remarkable only for its virulence, besought a heavy punishment for the Defendant, Cobbett. The speech is too long for insertion in our pages, but we will give the concluding paragraphs, in order to shew the rabid ferocity of the man:—

“Your lordships,” continued the Attorney-General, “may be strong enough now to restrain the criminal who now awaits your sentence; but, if you let him loose, who can say that you will have the same strength next year? I say it in deference, but it is the duty of your lordships, when such an offender comes within the view of public justice, to mark him with peculiar punishment. You have had private libellers before you; you punished them justly, though their offence could scarcely reach beyond the casual pain of the individuals whom they aspersed. You have had before you libellers on the administration of justice, and those you felt it your duty to punish; not from any personal feeling, but from the honourable and dignified consciousness that the character of the Courts of

Justice ought to stand in spotless and unblemished majesty before the people; and that an insult on their purity was an attack on the best interests of the nation. 'Those libellers arraigned the course of law; they did not dare to think of abolishing it altogether. Their guilt sinks and vanishes away before the bold and glaring crime of the man who stands before you. Their object was not to destroy society. If you punished others, you will punish this criminal with a more severe visitation, for a more extensive crime.'

"My Lords.—The army, insulted by this libel, calls on you for justice. The Government, which, however it may be formed, must look to public esteem, for any power of public good, and whose authority, to be useful, must be conformable to the laws.—the people, terrified, disgusted, and indignant, at the calumnies by which this libeller would shake all the foundations of natural security, call on you for justice.

"I leave the case to you; I know that justice will be administered by you, tempered with mercy; but your lordships will not forget, that, if there be a mercy due to the individual, there is a more solemn and important mercy due to the nation."

LORD ELLENBOROUGH.—"Let the four defendants be brought up for judgment on Monday next."

The court then rose, and Mr. Cobbett, with the other defendants, were taken, in the custody of the Marshall, to the King's Bench Prison, accompanied by Major Cartwright and some other friends.

On Monday the 9th of July, Mr. Cobbett and his fellow prisoners were brought up for judgment. The public expectation, which had been for the last few days anticipating the sentence of the court, was so much excited that Westminster Hall was crowded at an early hour, and it was with considerable difficulty that the avenues to the court could be approached.

Mr. Justice Grose attended during the morning to go through the routine business; and it was not till half-past eleven that the Lord Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Le Blanc, and Mr. Justice Bayley, took their seats on the Bench. The passages were by this time so full, that all the exertions of the tipstalls were necessary to make way for the

counsel. Lord Ellenborough directed the lower part of the court to be cleared of strangers, but the crowd was too dense to be removed without great confusion, and, as the less of the two evils, strangers were suffered to remain.

After the tumult had subsided, the defendants, Mr. Cobbett, Messrs. Budd and Bagshaw, the publishers, and Mr. T. C. Hansard, the printer of the Political Register, were brought into the court. After the Attorney-General had prayed judgment in the usual form, Mr. Justice Grose proceeded to pass the sentence of the court. He principally addressed himself to Mr. Cobbett, and animadverted with particular severity upon the libel on which the Defendant was convicted. "It was a work which no well-disposed mind could doubt to have been framed for the most pernicious objects. Looking at the time at which it was written; looking at the circumstances of the world, there could be no doubt of the evil intention of the paper. The tendency of the paper," said the judge, "is in so many words to excite an unwillingness and dislike to the service of the country, among those who are to be its defence; and to insult those foreigners who are in our service, to deprive the country of their honourable assistance, and paralyse the energies of the state.

"And, at what time was this libel published? At a time when a lawless and violent enemy was threatening our shores. And yet it was with this enemy that the mild and parental government of our country was to be contrasted, and disgraced by the contrast. Our country, where every comfort, every privilege, and every honour, that could be afforded to the army, was afforded by the liberality of the laws; was this to be compared with that country whose object was conquest, and whose soldiers were sacrificed, to every pursuit of insolent and unfeeling ambition? The evil of the publication was therefore enhanced by the time at which it was sent forth through the nation.

The Defendant could not complain of any severity in the justice which had been freely and fairly dealt out to him. He had had a patient trial. He might have removed, if he would, the doubt which the jury might have entertained of the evil of the pernicious libel, for which he was

now to receive sentence. But the objects of the libel were too palpable; the jury found you, William Cobbett, guilty, upon the fullest and most satisfactory evidence. If it were to be allowed that your object was not to embarrass and enfeeble the operations of government, there can be no grounds for exculpating you from the guilt of libelling, for the base and degrading object of making a stipend by your crime. If there had been no other imputation upon you, the court, as protecting the peace and purity of the public mind, would have felt itself called upon to punish you severely. It is strange that a man, who mixes so much in general and common life, as you do, should not see that such acts as those for which you have been tried are only productive of mischief to every mind that is influenced by them; and that they necessarily terminate in punishment on the guilty author. It is strange that experience should not have taught you, and that you should be only advancing in a continual progress of malignity. What were the circumstances that you distorted in your libel? The Local Militia, in the Isle of Ely mutinied, they overpowered their officers; and there was nothing to restrain them from committing acts of violence and injury on those very inhabitants of Ely whom you insult for permitting their just punishment. The German Legion, who were accidentally in the neighbourhood, were called in to enforce that discipline which is as necessary for the well being of the army, as the security of the people. Some were punished; many were forgiven; and even of those whose crime could not be altogether passed over, a part of the punishment was remitted; yet this you describe as an act of atrocious tyranny. You speak of the crime as if it were nothing more than a trifling dispute about a small sum of money, and the punishment as being violent and oppressive in the extreme; you insulted the soldiers, and said they took the flogging like so many trunks of tress. The whole intention of your libel was to throw disgrace on the government, and to disgust and alienate the army. If you had any thing to offer in extenuation, you might have offered it; the court would have received it, and, in all events, impartial justice would have been dealt to you. I now pass the sentence of the court upon you, William Cobbett, as the principal criminal, who now stand before the court.

The court do accordingly adjudge, that you William Cobbett, pay to our lord, the king, a fine of £1,000; that you be imprisoned in His Majesty's gaol of Newgate for the space of two years; and that at the expiration of that time, you enter into a recognizance to keep the peace for seven years, yourself in the sum of £3,000, and two good and sufficient securities in the sums of £1,000 each. And further that you be imprisoned till that recognizance be entered into, and that fine paid.

His lordship then addressed the other defendants, Messrs. Budd and Bagshaw, and, after observing that from their having suffered judgment to go by default, and their not having any share of the profit of the paper, their offence was lighter than that of the criminal, on whom sentence had been just passed, their punishment should be lighter; but, that they might understand in future that no carelessness or inattention in the publisher is a sufficient excuse for sending out into the world mischievous works, the court had determined that they should be imprisoned for two months each in the King's Bench.

His lordship then commented on the guilt of Mr. Hansard, the printer, who, from having read the proof-slips, and having it in his power to read over the entire production before it left his hands, was guilty of a high offence in allowing the libel to come forth to the public; the extenuations of his offence, as well as those of the two preceding defendants, had been attended to by the court, and in consideration thereof, the court would only sentence him to three months imprisonment in the King's Bench prison, and to enter into a recognizance to keep the peace for three years, himself in £400, and two sureties in £200 each.

The defendants then withdrew in the custody of the officer of the court.

Mr. Cobbett appeared not much affected by the sentence; his deportment during its delivery was unbarrassed,—he left the court with a smile on his countenance.

This sentence, though it was not one of death, was, in effect, one of ruin, as far as his possessed property went. Every one regarded the judgment as severe in the extreme. He lived in the country at that time, seventy miles from London; he had a farm on

hands. He had a family of small children, amongst whom he had constantly lived; he had a most devoted and anxious wife, who was, too, in that state which rendered the separation more painful ten-fold. On going to prison, Mr. Cobbett was put into a place among *felons*, from which he had to rescue himself at the price of *twelve guineas a week* for the whole of the two years. The King—(George III) was, at the close of his imprisonment, not in a condition to receive the thousand pounds; but his son, (the Regent) punctually received it “in his name and behalf.”

But all the misery that Cobbett endured appeared as nothing, compared with the circumstances that he must have a *child born in a felon's gaol*, or be absent from the scene at the time of the birth. His wife, who had gone to see him for the last time previous to her lying-in, perceiving his deep dejection at the approach of her departure for Botley, resolved not to go; and consequently went and took a lodging as near to Newgate as she could find one, in order that the communication between them might be as speedy as possible; and in order that the naturally anxious husband might see the doctor, and receive assurances from him relative to her state. The nearest lodging that she could find was in Skinner Street, at the corner of one of the streets leading to Smithfield. So that there she was, amidst the incessant rattle of coaches and butchers' carts, and the noise of cattle, dogs, and bawling men, instead of being in a quiet and commodious country house, with neighbours and servants, and everything necessary about her. Yet, so great is the power of the mind in such cases, she,—though the circumstances proved uncommonly perilous, and were attended with the loss of the child,—bore her sufferings with the greatest composure, because, at any minute, she could send a message to, or hear from, her husband. If she had gone to Botley, leaving him in that state of anxiety in which she saw him, it is most likely she would have died; and that event taking place at such a distance from poor Cobbett, how was he to contemplate her corpse, surrounded by her distracted children, and escape death, or madness himself? If such was not the effect of this merciless act of the government towards him, that amiable body might be assured that he had taken and recorded

the will for the deed, and that, as such it lived in his memory as long as that memory lasted.

Mr. Cobbett himself says, speaking of this event : " The blow was, to be sure, a terrible one ; and, oh God ! how was it felt by my poor children ! It was in the month of July when the horrible sentence was passed upon me. My wife, having left her children in the care of her good and affectionate sister, was in London, waiting to know the doom of her husband. When the news arrived at Botley, the three boys, one eleven, another nine, and the other seven years old, were hoeing cabbages in that garden which had been the source of so much delight. When the account of the savage sentence was brought to them, the youngest could not, for some time, be made to understand what a *gail* was ; and when he did, he, all in a tremor exclaimed, " Now, I'm sure William, that Papa is not in a place *like that* ? " The other, in order to disguise his tears and smother his sobs, fell to work with his hoe, and *chopped about like a blind person*. This account, when it reached me, affected me more, filled me with deeper resentment, than any other circumstance. And, oh ! how I despise the wretches who talk of my *vindictiveness*, of my *exultation* at the confusion of those who inflicted those sufferings ! How I despise the base creatures, the crawling slaves, the callous and cowardly hypocrites, who affect to be '*shocked*' (tender souls) at my expressions of joy, and at the death of Gibbs, Ellenborough, Perceval, Liverpool, Canning, and the rest of the tribe that I have already seen out, and at the fatal working of *that system*, for endeavouring to check which, I was thus punished ! How I despise these wretches, and how I, above all things, enjoy their ruin, and anticipate their utter heggary ! What ! I am to forgive, am I, injuries like this ; and that, too, without any *atonement* ? Oh, no ! I have not so read the Holy Scriptures ; I have not from them learned that I am not to rejoice at the fall of unjust foes ; and it makes a part of my happiness to be able to *tell millions of men* that I do thus rejoice, and that I have the means of calling on so many just and merciful men to rejoice along with me."

In the interval between the conviction and the passing of that heavy sentence upon Mr. Cobbett, it seems that he contemplated the discontinuance of the *Register*, on

condition that government would give up the prosecution and content itself with giving a merely nominal punishment. Under all the circumstances of the case we think the reader must acquit Cobbett of the charge of truckling to his oppressors, or of endeavouring to screen himself from the wrath of those who sought his destruction. The sacrifice was a great one for him to make, and it was only in consideration of his wife and numerous family that induced him to think, even for a moment, of such a course. Urged on by the impulses of his own heart, he however, did make the offer, and the following address to his readers and subscribers appeared in the next number of the *Register*.

"TO THE READERS OF THE REGISTER."

"As I never have written, merely for the sake of gain; and as I have always held it to be a base act to write upon political subjects, or, more correctly speaking, to take a part in the war of politics, merely with a view to emolument or the means of a livelihood, I cannot of course, after what has taken place, think it proper, let the pecuniary loss be what it may, to continue any longer this publication; and, therefore, with this present number, which also concludes the volume, *I put an end to it for ever*. I hardly think that any statement of my reasons for doing this can be necessary to any body; for it must be manifest, that if the work were continued, it could not be what it has been, and, of course it could no longer meet with the approbation of those by whom it has been hitherto approved of. It is manifest, that; if continued, it must take quite a new tone and manner; nay, that its matter must also be changed; that, in short, it must be totally different to what it has hitherto been; and, therefore, those who have most highly valued its existence, must, of course, be the most desirous that it should now cease to exist.

"I know that there will, nevertheless, be enough persons to say, that I have *deserted the cause*; but I shall ask, *whose cause*? It is, I presume, meant, the cause of the public, or the people, or the country,—give it what name you please. Well, if the putting a stop to this work be an injury to the country, let it be recollected, that it is the country itself who have condemned me."

This contemplated suspension of his Register, however, did not meet with the result anticipated. Ministers now had the enemy in their grasp, and they were determined to mete out a punishment that should amply satiate their revenge. Mr. Cobbett was fined in a heavy amount, and condemned to wear out two years of his existence in a wretched prison. He then found that he had no mercy to expect at their hands, and, abandoning his design, he determined to continue his paper under all the disadvantages in which he was placed. The publication proceeded as usual, and the increased number of his subscribers afforded a gratifying proof that his case met with the commiseration of thousands of his fellow subjects.

As soon as the sentence was known many gentlemen, admirers of Mr. Cobbett, proposed setting on foot a subscription for the purpose of paying the fine which had thus been imposed upon him. The proposal having been warmly received, was soon afterwards made known to him, but Cobbett rejected their proffered kindness with many thanks, declaring that he would not suffer his friends to sacrifice their own interests in furthering his. He, however, stated that he would have no objection to accept of the assistance they had thus volunteered, provided they would accept the value of whatever money they might feel inclined to advance. This was acceded to by the men who had thus stepped forward to his relief, and the following letter, explanatory of his views of the subject was published in the Register of August 11th, 1810:—

TO THE READERS OF THE REGISTER.

"Many Gentlemen have, by letter, as well as verbally, proposed to me the putting forward a subscription for the purpose of indemnifying me and my family against the heavy expenses and loss, which have been, and must be, incurred, in consequence of that prosecution, the nature, the progress, and the result of which are too well known to be here dwelt upon. It must be manifest to every one, that these expenses, including all the various sorts of them, will extend to several thousands of pounds, besides the loss which I must suffer in my concerns at home, and, indeed, in many ways, which cannot well be

mentioned, and which it is not at all necessary to mention, or to hint at, to those who have ever known what it is to be so situated as to lead the world to believe, that peculiar distress, if not ruin, is even the possible consequence. I am, however, happy to say, that I have been not only able to withstand all pressure of the sort here alluded to; but, that, without any extraordinary aid from any quarter, I should feel confident of my ability to proceed, and with the blessing of continued health, make a suitable provision for all my children. Yet, though I neither feel nor dread *poverty*, I do not think that I ought to neglect any means consistent with honesty and honour, to guard myself, and, which is of more consequence, my *family*, against it. My health, thank God, is as good as ever it was; but I have no security for either health or life, any more than other men; and, if I were now to attempt an *insurance* upon my life, *Newgate* would tell pretty strongly against me. It is, therefore, impossible for me not to feel an anxious desire to see my family, at least, guarded against *certain* expense and loss above mentioned; but I have, as has been stated, to two in particular, of the gentlemen who have proposed the subscription, an objection to that mode of obtaining of indemnity. There is, however another mode, which, though perhaps attended in the end, with little positive and numerical gain, would answer all my views full as well, while it would remove every objection which the mode of subscription presents. It is this;—upon reviewing my stock of printed books, I find that I have a number of SETS OF THE REGISTER, from its commencement to the present time, which, by reprinting one whole volume and part of another, I can make complete; there will be in each set, SEVENTEEN VOLUMES, the price of which, bound in the usual way, will be, what it always has been, 25½ guineas; about one-third of which goes to the book-binder and the publisher, exclusive of the cost of paper and printing. The exact number that I have of these sets I do not yet know; but, this I know, that when they are disposed of, there will never be another complete copy sold, as I shall now have every set that can be completed made up and prepared for sale. In the course of a *few years* all these sets would be disposed of in the usual course of bookselling; but *on*

immediate sale of the whole would, from the consideration before mentioned, produce great convenience to me, besides the ease of mind, which would arise from reflecting on the security that it would give to my family, in case my long punishment should, as I trust it will not, be attended with consequences fatal to myself. Such, Gentlemen, therefore, as wished for the opening of a subscription for the purpose above mentioned, will, in this mode, have an opportunity of doing that which will be equally advantageous, and much more agreeable to me; and all that I shall say in the way of request, is, that each individual disposed to further the object in view, would recollect, that in this case, as in all others, where success depends upon the co-operation of many; *each individual* so disposed, should look upon that success as wholly depending upon *himself*, and should conclude that, unless he act up to his wishes, every one else will content himself with wishes alone."

This extract will be sufficient, we should imagine to prove to any, not resolutely opposed to fact, that Mr. Cobbett was not the sordid man he had been represented to be. Here is an offer made to subscribe for him a large sum of money which he refuses to accept under any other terms than giving an equivalent in return. Does this look like avarice? Does this look like a man grasping at all he can get, and preferring to live upon the labours of others rather than his own? Does it not, on the contrary, prove him to have been actuated by the most honourable principles? Is it not, in fact, sufficient to overturn the many calumnies that have been so industriously raised against him. In our opinion it speaks volumes in his favour, and, if no other instance could be found, this one would amply suffice to quiet the wretched idiots who have raised themselves up in hostility against him. But to return to this victim of Castlereagh's cold blooded cruelty, who was thus languishing within the walls of a prison, separated from his wife, and withheld from the society of those children, among whom it had ever been his greatest pleasure to pass the leisure moments of his life.

Notwithstanding his confinement in Newgate, Mr. Cobbett continued to write with his wonted perseverance and

spirit, and for a time he even published the *Register* twice a week; at this period, and for many subsequent years, he aimed the heaviest blows at the paper system of this country, and, we may attribute to his exertions that it afterwards tottered to its fall: had he been less active perhaps it might have existed a considerable time longer in all its mischievous strength.

At the termination of his two years imprisonment Mr. Cobbett was received by his friends and admirers with open arms. On the 9th of July, 1812, the day of his release from Newgate, he was invited to meet a large party to dinner, at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, where his partizans were to meet him for the purpose of celebrating his return among them. As the account is particularly interesting, we will give the particulars of this festival from the *Courier Evening Newspaper*.

“DINNER TO MR. COBBETT.”

Soon after five o'clock, Mr. Cobbett, accompanied by Sir Francis Burdett, Major Cartwright, Mr. Alderman Goodbehere, Mr. Alderman Wood, Mr. Waithman, Mr. Favell, and several other friends, entered the great room amid reiterated bursts of applause.

Sir Francis Burdett took the chair, and was supported on the right by Mr. Cobbett.

After the cloth was withdrawn the following toast was proposed from the chair, and pledged by the company present:

“The Prince Regent—may he call to mind the declaration of the Prince of Wales—‘That the crown is held in trust for the benefit of the people.’”

The following toast was then proposed, and drank with three, amid loud shouts of applause:

“The People—the source of all power.”

The next toast was also drank with three, accompanied by shouts of applause:—

“A Free Press, and Free Discussion.”

The following toast was then proposed by the Chair, and drank with three times three, amid great and repeated shouts of applause:—

“Our sincere congratulations on the release of that able

Advocate of Parliamentary Reform, and zealous opposer of the Flogging System—William Cobbett.”

Mr. Cobbett then rose, and said, that unused as he was, to speak in public, he should have contented himself on this occasion with the mere expression of his warmest thanks for the honour the company had done him, and his sincere approbation of those sentiments they had now expressed, and for the expression of which he had so lately suffered. On coming, however, to this place, a paper had been put into his hand, and, he supposed, into the hands of most of the gentlemen present, accusing him of inconsistency of conduct, and of supporting principles contrary to those he now held. He had also read this morning in *The Times* newspaper, an article which accused him of two articles which were equally unfounded. To these he found it necessary to advert, though he had no intent to delay them long. (*Loud Applause.*) Surely these men might have been satisfied after having put him in goal, among felons, and detained him so long, and after his having paid £1,000 to their king, and found further securities for seven years, without any further persecution. Of the source from which the paper that had been put into their hands had come, they could tell nothing: and the sort of criticism it contained, was little calculated to weigh with thinking men, or to require much animadversion. It showed that his opinions, ten years ago, were different from what they were now, and at that time he had expressed himself harshly towards the man who now did them the honour to preside on this occasion. (*Loud Applause.*) He had then exercised that right for which they now contended, and for which he had since suffered—the right of opinion and free discussion. He was then, he acknowledged, in the wrong, and was there any man living who was not sometimes in the wrong? He had since, publicly and avowedly acknowledged his error, and had given sufficient proofs of his change of opinion. A change of opinion was only disgraceful when produced by interested and pecuniary motives, and they all knew that, in changing his opinion of the Honourable Baronet, his interest could have no influence, as this was the least possible way of promoting it. (*Loud Applause.*) Those who had printed and sent the paper,—and most likely they had done so at

our expense (*loud applause*), did, however, unintentionally, the greatest honour to their worthy Chairman, who was in no need of being informed of the circumstance, and who was here to support, not the man, but the principle. (*Loud applause.*) They showed the Honourable Baronet's attachment to the cause, independently of all personal considerations, and that it was the principle, and not the man he supported. With respect to the *Times* newspaper, the whole of which it accused him, was a tissue of falsehoods. The intended advertisement of his they had there published, did not show that he repented what he had done, but, merely, that he did not think, in the circumstances he was then placed, that he could exercise the same liberty of discussion he had done before, and that he did not wish to lower the tone of his paper, but rather to abandon it, with all its profits. That advertisement was written at Botley, after the trial, seventy miles from London, and sent to all the newspapers, when the next number of the *Register*, which happened to complete the volume, was intended, under the impression he had mentioned, to be the last. On reflection, however, with himself, after this advertisement was sent away, it occurred to him, that dropping the *Register* might be misunderstood by the public, as an abandonment of the cause. Mr. Finnerty, who was with him at Botley at the time, could bear testimony to what he stated, and on this determination set off immediately in a post-chaise for town, to prevent the publication of this advertisement. This he had done, not from any personal or pecuniary motive, but to prevent the impression he had alluded to being made on the public mind. As there might be persons present who were not acquainted with the nature of the punishment he had undergone, and to what a man was doomed when sent to prison for libel, he would take the liberty of stating some of the particulars. He was sent to the *felons'* side of Newgate, where a yard is attached to the cells, only thirty-seven feet long by twenty-seven wide. Here, in the same prison, were persons of the lowest description, and even some for unnatural crimes. In the prison to which he (Mr. Cobbett) was sent was Aslett for one, and another man, who was transported next day, and into whose cell he (Mr. C.) was put, where Major Cartwright, when he

called on him, found him, and here he must have remained had he not redeemed himself by his purse. To be sent to prison, therefore, for what was called a libel, was not a bed of roses. In the same prison where Mr. Eaton was confined, was a man imprisoned for unnatural crimes. This man was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment only, and to stand once in the pillory; while Mr. Eaton had stood once in the pilory, and was to undergo twenty two months' imprisonment. He (Mr. Cobbett) had mentioned this with a view that Mr. Eaton's situation might attract their attention; whose case, at his advanced time of life, was extremely severe. Mr. Cobbett concluded by observing, that if he wanted any motive to attach him to the cause of Liberty, that motive he should always find in those sentiments of gratitude he felt for the honour they had done him this day. (*Loud applause.*)

The following toasts were then drank :—

"The memory of William Prynne, who, after being punished as a seditious libeller, for exposing the corruptions of the court, lived to bring his persecutor and unjust judge to the block."

"Mr. Drakard, and the other victims of ex-officio informations."

"May the servants of the people be prevented from becoming their masters, by the Radical Reform proposed by that firm opposer of undefined privilege,—Sir Francis Burdett."

This toast was drank with three times three, amid the greatest bursts of applause.

Sir Francis Burdett observed, that it sometimes fell to his lot to address another assembly, now alluded to, and that he had often seen gentlemen assume what he had always deprecated; while professing to be the representatives of the people, they did take upon themselves to act as their masters. This high life below stairs it had often fallen to his lot to witness. (*A laugh.*) This was an assumption equally hostile to the people, and the fair and legal prerogative of the Crown. They were met this day on an occasion in which all civilized men throughout the world would sympathise; to congratulate a man who had suffered in the common cause of mankind; whose pen had long had its due weight with the public, and whose

principles would always stand the test of public opinion. They had already seen how much the cause of humanity had benefited by his endeavours on the subject, for the discussion of which he had been imprisoned. He was sure that, by an impartial jury of Englishmen, he would have had a Civic Crown awarded to him, instead of that punishment, which he would not say he had suffered unmeritedly, but which he had so meritoriously sustained. Freedom of discussion was our birthright, and by the dissemination of truth alone, through the medium of a free press, we could hope to preserve or attain our liberties. That it should exist, however, in a government so corrupt was more than they could reasonably expect. The talent, however, and ability employed by the press, if not wholly silenced, would bring about such an union of opinion and sentiment, as must shake corruption to its basis. Time, the great discoverer of all things, would discover what measures government intended, in consequence of their Secret Committee, for as yet it had been kept a profound secret, what measures they intended adopting, or if any, though the question was to come on to-morrow. The great enemy to the liberty of the press, was the power exercised by the Attorney General in filing *ex officio* informations, a power assumed contrary to reason, law, and common sense. According to this system, a man might be put to all the risk and expense of a trial without even having the cause brought to issue. It was putting the law into the hands of the Attorney-General, and under the control of Government, which reminded him, (Sir P. Burdett) of an anecdote of King James I. when he came first to this country. Being a stranger and unacquainted with the forms of the government, he asked, if the king made the judges and bishops? and being answered in the affirmative, he said, "Oh! then, I may have what law, and what sort of gospel I please!" (*A laugh.*) Our forefathers had good sense enough to guard against an evil of this kind, by not trusting the power out of their own hands. A jury, therefore, was provided to intervene in every question affecting the property or life of a subject. This provision, wise and salutary as it was, the Attorney General took away by his *ex officio* informations, exposing an individual to all the vexations and expense of a prosecution, which he might

abandon at any time, if he chose, without assigning a reason, while, if the trial should be brought to issue, the Crown had the nomination of the Jury ; better be under an absolute despotism than undergo this sort of oppression under the pretext of law. Sir William Blackstone, though at the time he wrote he was considered as a Court tool, was now regarded as too favourable to the rights of the people, and on these subjects, indeed, as inculcating jacobinical doctrines, so much had we lost sight of all constitutional views. He says, in those cases where the State or Constitution is in immediate danger the Attorney-General has a right to come, when the law does not provide a remedy ; but have those people who have suffered from these informations, done any thing to cause their fear of immediate mischief ? To stifle discussion was the great desideratum of all tyranny. To commit oppression and stifle complaint was the object of every corrupt and profligate government. They had heard of a tyrant, who, delighting in cruelty, contrived a brazen bull, in which he enclosed his victims of his resentment, and kindled a fire about it, being pleased to hear the bull roar. These *ex officio* informations, however, were refining even in this species of cruelty, for the unfortunate sufferer was not even permitted to utter a complaint. They had heard also of another tyrant, who had a bed, on which he laid the victims of his cruelty, and those who were too short had their limbs stretched to answer the bed, while those who were too long had them cut off in order to fit it. This was somewhat like the treatment of the Press, there being a common standard to which the mind must be rendered, which, as it affected the mind, was equal in brutality to the other. (*Loud applause.*)

With respect to Mr. Cobbett's former opinions, he (Sir F. Burdett) hoped that gentleman would always state his opinions with the same independence. They did not wish all men to be of the same opinion with themselves ; all they contended for was, freedom of discussion, a fair stage, and no favour. What the gentleman on his right had suffered, whose liberation they met this day to congratulate, would formerly have been thought illegal. It was a maxim in the old law, that, except in criminal cases, a person could not suffer both in purse and person

Here, however, not only personal pains were inflicted, but a high fine levied. Except in the practice of the Star Chamber, they had seldom met with a doctrine so cruel and unjust. (*Applause*). It was *ex officio* informations that rendered the Star Chamber odious, and that, if persisted in, must take away the credit of the Court of King's Bench. While the officers of justice continued to do their duty, there was no fear to be entertained of their not being held in public estimation. All they wished was that discussion should be as free as air. If any mischief resulted from such discussion, the common law of the land afforded every reasonable relief. When they supported the liberty of the Press, they did not contend for licentiousness. Freedom of the Press had always been the proof of a free country. He compared those who fell into the Attorney-General's hand, to Daniel, who was cast into the Lions' Den. Daniel had the good fortune to escape however, but very few who fell into the Attorney-General's claws, ever escape. (*Applause.*) With respect to the flogging of soldiers, he (Sir F. Burdett) observed, as Mr. Cobbett had justly written, that it was not to be borne; that men should be taken from the plough, and have the flesh torn off their backs by a cat o' nine tails, while Government troops are employed to see that the punishment be inflicted. (*Loud applause.*) Such a circumstance in former times, would have raised a forest of arms all over the country. It was not only the cause of humanity, but our national honour was violated. Mr. Cobbett might be proud, till the day of his death, of having suffered in so honorable a cause, it was a lot that was less to be avoided than to be envied. It was a cause in which our Sidneys and our Hampdens had suffered before us.

Sir Francis concluded by warmly seconding the idea that had been thrown out with respect to the case of those victims of oppression that had suffered in this way, and especially recommended the case of Mr. Eaton, who had suffered so often, and was now suffering with the same fortitude as ever, though at a very advanced period of life. He (Sir F. Burdett) hoped some relief would be afforded him while in prison, and was convinced he must find an advocate in the bosom of every man who now heard him.

(*Applause.*) The Honourable Baronet then thanked the company for the honour they had done him in drinking his health, and for their approbation of his conduct, which he might not, perhaps, always meet with, but which he should always endeavour to preserve.

The following toast was then drank :—

“Revision of the Penal Code—may it be rendered more severe against public depredators, and less severe against starving manufacturers.”

Mr. Collier, referring to the accusation in the *Times* against Mr. Cobbett; called on that gentleman to rebut them, thinking it necessary that some satisfactory answer should be given. The charge he considered two-fold; that of attempting to raise subscription in an indirect way, and that of offering to discontinue the *Register*, should he not be brought up for judgment.

Mr. Cobbett observed, that the publication alluded to in the *Times* newspaper, which he held in his hand, had appeared only this morning. The gentleman, for any thing he knew, might be the author of it; but he ought certainly to have done it sooner, that he might have had an opportunity of answering it; and not on the very day of their meeting. With respect to the subscription, he did not see how he could be accused of this, as he had refused to accede to any such proposition when made to him.—Having, however, a number of sets of his *Register* on hand, that were unsold, he had certainly a right to advertise them, leaving any person to purchase that might please, at the usual price. He did not even say that he would thank any person to purchase them. With respect to discontinuing the *Register*, he had certainly a power to do so, should it suit his conveniency, or should he suppose he had enough to keep himself and his family without this labour. He could only say, that he had never made any proposition to have the punishment remitted, nor had any proposition of that sort ever been made to him, nor had he even, ever thought of it. (*Great applause.*)

Mr. Collier again mounted the table, and attempted to speak, but from the continued clamour and opposition, could not be heard.

Sir Francis Burdett then addressed the meeting on

the propriety of allowing every man a fair hearing. He would request, however, persons coming forward in this way to fight in armour. Mr. Cobbett stood the shot of everybody that fired at him, but it was right the company should know who the gentleman was.

Mr. Collier, when permitted to be heard, said, that though he did not see there was a necessity for it, he was not ashamed to declare his name to the company, or to proclaim it to the whole world. He disclaimed having any concern in the article alluded to, or any motive of hostility against Mr. Cobbett. He only wished that the assertions in the *Times* should be as publicly refuted as they had been made, and he felt as much satisfaction as any individual present, in the ample justification Mr. Cobbett had made. (*Loud applause.*)

After the toast, "Success to the American Patriots," had been given, Mr. Cobbett, Sir Frances Burdett and his other immediate friends retired.

On the day following this event, Mr. Cobbett quitted London to return once more to Botley, where preparations had been made by his neighbours to receive him in a manner that should convince his enemies how much they admired the man whom they had thus persecuted. In order to give the greater *clat* to this joyful occasion, it was proposed to set the bells a ringing on his entrance into the village, but the request for permission to do so was peremptorily refused by the liberal-minded parson of the parish, and this part of the ceremony was of course obliged to be omitted. About eight o'clock on Saturday evening, July 11th, 1812, the landlord of the principal Inn, bearing a large flag, and accompanied by a vast concourse of persons, set out to meet Mr. Cobbett. At the distance of about a mile from the village they met Mr. C. in an open landau, when taking the horses from his carriage, the victim of ministerial oppression was borne triumphantly to the house of his agent, where he addressed the crowd in a speech expressive of his gratitude, and explanatory of the *crime* and other circumstances attending his recent imprisonment. Having concluded, he returned to his own house, when the remainder of the evening was spent in the bosom of that now happy family, from which he had been so long separated.

From this period Mr. Cobbett was allowed to remain unmolested by his enemies. The Register was continued, and his attacks upon an infamous government were pursued with that vigour which he could at all times bring to his aid whenever he sought to expose or crush an adversary. Yet, in spite of this fierce warfare in politics, his life was now spent in comparative peacefulness—his family required all his attention with respect to their education and the formation of their youthful minds. His farming speculation at Botley, it is true, turned out not quite so profitable as he had anticipated, but this he the less regretted, as it proved to him a source of pleasure, amusement, and experimental utility. More or less he contrived to cultivate land throughout the remainder of his life, boasting, with, honest pride, that the character of a farmer was his aim, pride, and desired distinction.

In the year 1816, Mr. Cobbett, at the instigation of Lord Cochrane, reduced the price of his Register to twopence, that it might be read the more extensively by the industrious classes of society. The effect of this step exceeded even his most sanguine expectations, and in a short time afterwards, he saw his favourite work attain a sale varying from seventy-five to one hundred thousand weekly. A great feeling was thus produced throughout the country, and more particularly in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Political observations began to be extensively circulated throughout the country; he in fact introduced a new era into the politics of England. Other writers, Hone, Wooller, Sherwin, Wade and Carlile, entered the field of cheap political publications, and roused a feeling that in 1819 was near insurrectionary combustion, and led to the notorious Six Acts of that year. Mr. Cobbett had, single-handed, induced the Ministers to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, at the meeting of Parliament in 1817 almost avowedly to obtain over him the absolute power of imprisonment without cause shown. The whole country seemed inspired with one common feeling of patriotism. The Ministers of the day, Liverpool, Castlereagh, Canning, and Sidmouth, met them with spies and instigators to plots and insurrection, and thus obtained a green bag full of documents,

on which to plead a justification for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Mr. Cobbett was in Parliament declared the cause of all the trouble and the aim of the Ministers, who despaired of again bringing his now cautious writing under the system called the Law of Libel. This epoch was one of fearful and engrossing interest, and of the most perilous importance to the cause of Reform, which, in spite of the desperate attempt of power to crush it for ever, in 1817, has since obtained a partial triumph,—the sure precursor of a future and complete victory. The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended by the Parliament on the 4th of March, 1817. It was openly avowed by Government that this stretch of arbitrary power was chiefly occasioned by the writings of William Cobbett, and was resorted to for the purpose of enabling the Home Secretary of State to throw that formidable champion of reform into prison. This avowal was the more extraordinary and humiliating, inasmuch as it was at the same time acknowledged by Lord Sidmouth, that the law officers of the Crown had been unable to find anything in Mr. Cobbett's writings upon which a prosecution could be instituted, with a reasonable prospect of obtaining a conviction against him! The constitution of the country, therefore, was temporarily subverted, and the personal freedom of every one of its inhabitants flagitiously placed at the absolute disposal of the Government, for the purpose of *silencing* a man against whose language no violation of the law could be even alleged, and whose influence and reputation had been only increased by the futile attempts which had been previously made, on the part of all the advocates of corruption, to combat his principles and doctrines, though the medium of the press.

One of the most remarkable occurrences in the domestic history of the year 1817, was the double renewal of the bill for the *suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act*, moved first in the two Houses near the close of February, and afterwards, upon a fresh alarm, in the month of June. The majorities by which these measures were carried sufficiently indicated the affright which was spread through the most opulent, and the most timorous class of the nation; at the same time the number was not in-

considerable of those who held firmly to the maintenance of laws which were regarded as the palladium of English liberty. The termination of these disputes threw a degree of discredit upon the ministry, who, by the employment of spies, seemed to aggravate the discontents which were already too prevalent among the inferior ranks of the people.

On the 24th of February, a bill for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was moved in the House of Lords. It was introduced by Lord Sidmouth, who began his speech by an eulogy upon the manner in which the secret committee had laid its discoveries before the House. There were three principal features to which he would advert: 1. That no doubt was left in the minds of the committet, that a traitorous correspondence existed in the metropolis, for the purpose of overthrowing the established government: 2. That the committee are deeply concerned to report their full conviction, that designs of this nature have not been confined to the capital, but are extending widely through the most populous and manufacturing districts: 3. That such a state of things cannot be suffered to continue without hazarding the most imminent and dreadful evils.

After descanting on these points, his lordship proceeded to set in a strong light the danger into which the public welfare was brought; and he touched upon the riot in the capital on December 2nd, and upon his own active services in suppressing it. He was thence led to take into consideration certain provisions of former legislatures, to guard against public evils; and he intimated the intention of the present ministers to renew some measures of this kind. In fine, he came to the direct point of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus, of which he said he was sincerely grieved to be the instrument, especially in a time of profound peace. "But it was one extraordinary quality of the British constitution,—(we quote his lordship's own words) that the powers of the executive government could be enlarged if by such means that constitution would be better secured. He required the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, in pity to the peaceable and loyal inhabitants of the country, for the protection of the two Houses

of Parliament, for the maintenance of our liberties, and for the security of the blessings of the constitution. It was not merely the lower orders which had united in these conspiracies; *individuals of great activity, resolution, and energy, were engaged in the contest.*"

This proposition was supported by the Marquis of Wellesley, the Earl of Liverpool, and Lord Grenville, but was strenuously opposed by Earl Grey, and a few others of the liberal Peers; after which the House divided, when there appeared Content 84, Proxies 66, Total 150; against, Not Content 23, Proxies 12, Total 35. Majority in favour of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, 115.

A protest was then entered upon the Journals to the following effect: "Dissentient. Because it does not appear to us that, in the report of the Secret Committee there has been stated such a case of imminent and pressing danger as may not be sufficiently provided against by the powers of the executive government under the existing laws, and as requires the suspension of the most important security of the liberty of the country." It was signed by eighteen Peers.

On the same day, February 24, Lord Castlereagh moved for leave to bring in a Bill on the same subject, which was granted by 190 votes against 14. The Bill was then introduced, and in a few days it was hurried through both Houses of Parliament, and received the assent of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent.

In March, 1817 we find Mr. Cobbett involved in an affair of some difficulty and danger. On the 11th of that month a public meeting had been convened at Winchester by the Sheriff, for the purpose of presenting an address to the Prince Regent. In the course of the proceedings Mr. Cobbett proposed an amendment to the address, by inserting after the word "Constitution," as "established by Magna Charta, the Bill of Rights, and the Act of Habeas Corpus, for which our forefathers fought and bled." Previous to putting this amendment Mr. Lockhart, (a gentleman well known for his connection with the Quarterly Review) came forward and declared that, if the meeting adopted Mr. Cobbett's amendment, they would declare against loyalty, and for

everything that was seditious and wicked. Upon which Mr. C. came forward again and exclaimed:—"Gentlemen, I am happy to say, that however we have been misled by our passions this day to express our difference in so violent a manner, upon one point I am sure we shall be perfectly unanimous, and that is that Mr. Lockhart has been guilty of the *foulest misrepresentation* that ever was made by mortal man."

In consequence of the severity of this expression, on the same evening, after the meeting broke up, Mr. Lockhart waited on Mr. Cobbett at his inn, accompanied by two gentlemen. What followed is thus related by Mr. C.—"I told him that I would have no communication with him except it was in writing. They wanted to sit down in the room where Mr. Goldsmith, Mr. Hunt, and other gentlemen were with me; but this I told them I would not suffer, and bade them go out of the room. They did so, and then a correspondence took place, which I insert here word for word and letter for letter, and if the Learned Friend should feel sore at seeing his *agitation* exposed in his illiterate notes, let him thank his own folly and imprudence for the exposure."

SIR,—As you requested me to put in writing the object of my requesting a meeting with you, I beg to inform you it was with a view to your retracting the word *foul* which you applied to me, by stating I had been guilty of "foul misrepresentation." I did not hear whether you said "of your language or intentions."

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

J. J. LOCKHART.

Winchester 11th March, 1817.

SIR,—I did not say that it was "*a foul misrepresentation*" which you had made, but "*the foulest misrepresentation that ever was made by mortal man*," an opinion which I still entertain, and always shall, until you shall fully express your sorrow for the effects of that mortification which I hope, led your tongue beyond the cool dictates of your mind.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble and obedient Servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Sir,—I have received your answer, which leaves no alternative except that of my insisting on that satisfaction which you owe me as a gentleman, and which I wish you would empower some friend to arrange this evening.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

March 11, 1817.

J. J. LOCKHART.

I shall remain in Winchester this evening for this purpose until eight o'clock, and a friend will deliver this letter to you, to accept your arrangement.

To Wm. Cobbett, Esq.

To this hostile communication Mr. Cobbett returned the following pithy reply :—

Winchester, March 11, 1817.

Sir,—If I could stay here another day, I would amuse myself with some fun with you, but having business of more importance on hand, I must request of you to renew your pleasant correspondence, upon our arrival in town. In the meanwhile, I remain

Your most obedient,

and most humble Servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Now a few plain facts will enable the reader to form a perfectly correct judgment of the case between these two parties.—First, Mr. Lockhart knew that Cobbett had written many essays reprobating, in the strongest terms the practice of duelling.—Second, he knew that the person he had thus challenged, had ever held it as a species of suicide, for a man in his situation, to fight a duel, seeing, that if one missed him, another would be found, till some one should kill him.—Third, (and this was Mr. Lockhart's rock of safety) he knew well that if Cobbett accepted of his challenge, he must instantly forfeit five thousand pounds. He knew that the man he had thus challenged had been bound in recognizances for seven years from the year 1812.—In this then, we see the

safety of this political wrangler. Mr. Cobbett wisely refused to give the required meeting, and we think the reader must be perfectly satisfied that his refusal did not in any way compromise his character or fair fame.

In a few days after this affair a report was industriously circulated by some injudicious friends, that Mr. Cobbett had been horsewhipped by Lockhart, while returning from a Mr. Brown's at Peckham, where he (Mr. C.) had slept the previous night. To this allegation Mr. Cobbett promptly replied, and in the next number of the *Register* appeared the following denial.

"Now, who, at a distance from London, would not believe this to be *true*? Who would not believe that there was, at least, truth in *some part* of it? Who would not believe, that, at any rate, I was at *Mr. Brown's on Sunday*? Who would believe, that it was *wholly false*? Nevertheless, I was not within several miles of Peckham last Sunday: I slept at No. 8, Catherine Street on that night; I never was out of that house on the Monday; and I have never seen *Lockhart the Brave* since he came to me, with his *two witnesses*, at the Black Swan at Winchester." Thus then were their lies refuted by a few plain facts, and Mr. Cobbett was never again troubled by these retailers of foul inventions.

The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, as has been already mentioned, on the 4th of March, 1817. Mr. Cobbett, therefore, secretly determined to fly from a power which had thus trampled upon the only law to which he could appeal for protection. In the meantime, however, and while he was preparing for his departure, he published his *Political Register* of the 8th March, "On the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act—on the Sedition and Treason Bills—and On the state to which we are reduced." This was followed by the *Political Registers* of March 15th and 22nd, the former addressed "To the Good and true Men of Hampshire," on the "Meeting at Winchester," &c., and the latter "A Letter to the *deluded* People," in which he exposes the despotism under the gloom of which the country was then placed.

At length he set off for Liverpool, to take shipping for America. The following description of his journey from

London, though short, is exquisitely beautiful and touching. Few men, even of those endowed with the necessary faculties and qualifications, could have maintained a state of mind fit for observing and feeling the beauties of the scenery through which Mr. Cobbett passed, under the trying circumstances that had driven him from a country which he evidently loved so well, and during his actual flight from the dangers with which he was threatened.

"I and my two sons, William and John, set off from London early in the morning of Saturday, the 22nd of March. We reached Litchfield that night, and Liverpool the next night about ten o'clock. Of the whole country through which we passed (and all of which was very fine) we were most delighted with ten miles from Dunchurch to Coventry, in Warwickshire. The road very wide and smooth; rows of fine trees on the sides of it; beautiful white-thorn hedges, and rows of ash and elm dividing the fields; the fields so neatly kept; the soil so rich; the herds and flocks of fine fat cattle and sheep on every side; the beautiful homesteads and numerous stacks of wheat! Every object seemed to say—Here are resources! Here is wealth! Here are all the means of national power, and of individual happiness; And, yet, at the end of these ten beautiful miles, covered with all the means of affording luxury in diet and in dress, we entered that city of Coventry, which out of *twenty thousand inhabitants*, contained at that very moment upwards of *eight thousand miserable paupers*; a fact, which we well knew, not only from the petition just presented to Parliament, but also from a detailed *official account* in manuscript, which I had in my possession amongst my papers in London; and one of the members for which formerly public-spirited though now miserable city, (Butterworth,) had *voted for all the recent measures of government*, and had been one of the most active though the most *silent* enemies of the cause of Reform!

"As we proceeded on through Staffordshire and Cheshire, all the same signs of wealth and of sources of power, on the surface of the earth, struck us by day, and by night, those more sublime signs, which issued from the furnaces

on the hills. The causeways for foot-passengers, *paved*, in some instances, for tens of miles together, as well, and more neatly, than the streets of London are paved; the beautiful rows of trees shading those causeways; the canals winding about through the valleys, conveying coal, lime, stone, merchandize of all sorts; the immense and lofty woods on the hills; and the fat cattle and sheep every where: every object seemed to pronounce an eulogium on the industry, the skill and perseverance of the people. And, *why*, then, are those people in a state of such *misery and degradation*? We knew the cause before, and so did you. The fat cattle and corn do not remain in sufficient quantities amongst those who, by their various toil, produce them. The farmer, instead of giving to his labourer a sufficient share of what is produced, is compelled to give it to the *tax-gatherer*; the *tax-gatherer* hands it over to the government; the government hands it over to the Fund-holder, the Sinecurist, the Pensioner, the Military Department, the Placemen, &c. It is the same with the master manufacturer and the master tradesman, who, instead of giving their work-people a sufficient quantity of money to enable them to share in the fat cattle and sheep, are compelled to give that share to the *tax-gatherer*. Hence it is, that the far greater part of these things go away from the spot and the neighbourhood where they are raised, to be *eaten by those who receive the taxes, and by those who attend upon them*. The taxes are carried away in the pockets of the taxing people; and the waggons and barges carry the corn, the butter, the cheese, and their own legs carry the cattle, pigs, and sheep, *after the taxes*. Accordingly, we met, every few miles, droves of fat oxen, pigs, and sheep, marching up towards the grand resort of the Fund-holders and Boroughmongers, and others who live upon the taxes."

Having thus conducted Mr. Cobbett to Liverpool on his way to the far distant shores of America, we will now pause for the purpose of casting a summary glance over the late and most active period of his life. Talk of difficulties, in the shape of rocks and breakers,, and quagmires, and quicksands, who ever escaped from so many as he did? Thrown, (by his own will, indeed,) on the wide world, at a very early age, without money to support, without

friends to advise, and without "book-learning" to assist him; passing a few years dependent solely on his own labour for his subsistence; then becoming a common soldier, and leading a military life, chiefly in foreign parts, for eight years. Quitting that life after—really for him high promotion—and with, for him, a large sum of money, (about 150*l.*); marrying at an early age, going at once to France to acquire the French language; thence to America, passing eight years there; becoming bookseller and author, and taking a prominent part in all the important discussions of the interesting period from 1793 to 1799; during which there was, in that country, a continued struggle carried on between the English and the French parties; conducting himself in the same active part he took in that struggle, in such a way as to call forth marks of unequivocal approbation from the Government at home. Returning to England in 1800; resuming his labours here; suffering two years of imprisonment, heavy fines, and, in fact a total breaking up of fortune, so as to be left without a bed to lie on, and, during all that time of difficulty and of punishment, writing and publishing, every week of his life, whether in exile or not, a few weeks only excepted, a periodical paper, containing more or less of matter worthy of public attention; writing and publishing during the same time a vast number of well-written books; all of them of great and continued sale, and some of the greatest circulation in the whole world, the Bible only excepted; having, during the same period of trouble and embarrassment, always, whether in exile or not, sustained a shop of some size; having, during the same period, never employed less, on an average than ten persons, in some capacity or other, exclusive of printers, bookbinders, and others, connected with papers and books; and having, during all this time of troubles, embarrassments, prisons, fines, and banishments, brought up a large family of children in a manner most creditable to himself. If such a man, we say, be not a fitting example to the rising generation of Englishmen, we know not where to look for one who has half the claims poor Cobbett had for our esteem and veneration.

Returning from this digression, into which we have been almost unconsciously led by our sincere admiration

of the man, we must now turn to a subject which we dare say is fresh in the minds of a good many of our older readers;—we mean his impressive and solemn leave-taking of his countrymen at the moment when he was about to depart, (as he then believed for ever,) from the much-loved land of his birth, and when he was obliged to sever himself, without even a moment's preparation, from all that he held to be most dear and estimable.

This extraordinary and remarkable document,—extraordinary for the cause of its production, and remarkable for the nature of its contents, is dated “Liverpool, March 28th, 1817.” As soon as the publisher in London was assured that Mr. Cobbett had actually set sail, it was published under the title of “Mr. Cobbett's taking leave of his countrymen.” It was extensively circulated throughout the kingdom, and was universally read,—by the authors and supporters of public abuses with open exultation and seeming triumph, though with secret shame, the self-abasing consciousness of degradation and guilt,—by the friends of Mr. Cobbett, the reformers, the advocates and adherents of liberty, with deep and unfeigned regret, and undisguised though short-lived dismay. For a time the most determined of the reformers were astounded and paralyzed. The flight of Cobbett necessarily gave rise to exaggerated notions of the dangers under the mere apprehension of which his daring and mighty spirit, pre-eminent as it was in its audacity, was thought to have quailed. His farewell to his oppressed country was heard as the knell of her departed Freedom. Despair accompanied the news of his flight, as it was gloomily spread throughout the land, and the hope of liberty heavily declined and nearly died in the stoutest heart of England. Time, however, confirmed the truth of Mr. Cobbett's declaration, that he fled through policy, not from fear,—and that he had no alternative but that of submitting to be silent, at a time when his cheering voice and courageous bearing were more than ever necessary to sustain the fortitude, and to reanimate the hopes and exertions of his countrymen.

The Farewell Address begins as follows :—

"MY BELOVED COUNTRYMEN,

Soon after this reaches your eyes, those of the writer will, possibly, have taken the last glimpse of the land that gave him birth, the land in which his parents lie buried, the land of which he has always been so proud, the land in which he leaves a people, whom he shall to his last breath love and esteem beyond all the rest of mankind.

"Every one, if he can do it without wrong has a right to pursue the path to his own happiness ; as my happiness, however, has long been inseparable from the hope of assisting in restoring the rights and liberties of my country, nothing could have induced me to quit that country while there remained the smallest chance of my being able, by remaining, to continue to aid her cause. No such chance is now left. The laws which have just been passed, especially if we take into view the real objects of those laws, forbid us to entertain the idea, that it would be possible to write on political subjects according to the dictates of truth and reason, without drawing down upon our heads certain and swift destruction. It was well observed by Mr. Brougham, in a late debate, that every writer, who opposes the present measures, "must now feel, that he sits down to write with a halter about his neck ;" an observation the justice of which must be obvious to all the world.

"Leaving, therefore, all considerations of personal interest, personal feeling, and personal safety ; leaving even the peace of mind of a numerous and most affectionate family wholly out of view, I have reasoned thus with myself : What is now left to be done ? We have urged our claims with so much truth ; we have established them so clearly on the ground of both law and reason, that there is no answer to us to be found other than that of a Suspension of our Personal Safety. If I still write in support of those claims, I must be blind not to see that a dungeon is my doom. If I write at all, and do not write in support of those, I not only degrade myself, but I do a great injury to the rights of the nation by appearing to abandon them. If I remain here, I must, therefore, *cease to write*, either from compulsion or from a sense of duty

to my countrymen; therefore, it is impossible to do any good to the cause of my country by remaining in it; but, if I remove to a country where I can write with perfect freedom, it is not only possible, but very probable, that I shall, sooner or later, be able to render that cause important and lasting services.

“Upon this conclusion it is, that I have made my determination; for, though life would be scarcely worth preserving with the consciousness that I walked about my fields or slept in my bed merely at the mercy of a Secretary of State; though, under such circumstances, neither the song of the birds in spring nor the well-strawed homestead in winter could make me forget that I and my rising family were slaves, still there is something so powerful in the thought of country, and neighbourhood, and home, and friends, there is something so strong in the numerous and united ties with which these and endless other objects fasten the mind to a long-inhabited spot, that to tear oneself away nearly approaches to the separating the soul from the body. But, then, on the other hand, when I asked myself: “What! shall I submit in silence? Shall I be as dumb as one of my horses? Shall that indignation which burns within me be quenched? Shall I make no effort to preserve even the chance of assisting to better the lot of my unhappy country? Shall that mind, which has communicated its warmth to millions of other minds, now be extinguished for ever; and shall those, who, with thousands of pens at their command, still saw the tide of opinion rolling more and more heavily against them, now be forever secure from that pen, by the efforts of which they feared being overwhelmed? Shall truth never again be uttered? Shall her voice never again be heard even from a distant shore?”

“Thus was the balance turned; and, my Countrymen, be you well assured, that, though I shall, if I live, be at a distance from you; though the ocean will roll between us, not all the barriers that nature as well as art can raise, shall be sufficient to prevent you from reading some parts, at least, of what I write; and, notwithstanding all the wrongs of which I justly complain; notwithstanding all the indignation that I feel; notwithstanding all the provocations that I have received, or that I may receive; nev-

shall there drop from my pen any thing, which, according to the *law of the land*, I might not safely write and publish in England. Those, who have felt themselves supported by power, have practised towards me foul play without measure; but, though I shall have the means of retaliation in my hands, never will I follow their base example.

“Though I quit my country, far be it from me to look upon her cause as desperate, and still farther be it from me to wish to infuse despondency into your minds. *I can serve that cause no longer by remaining here*; but the cause itself is so good, so just, so manifestly right and virtuous, and it has been combated by means so unusual, so unnatural, and so violent, that it *must triumph* in the end. Besides, the circumstances of the country all tend to favour the cause of Reform. Not a tenth part of the evils of the system are yet in existence. The country gentlemen, who have till now been amongst our most decided adversaries, will be very soon compelled, for their own preservation, to become our friends and fellow-labourers. Not a fragment of their property will be left, if they do not speedily bestir themselves. They have been induced to believe, that a Reform of the Parliament would expose them to plunder or degradation; but they will very soon find, that it will afford them the only chance of escaping both. The wonder is, that they do not see this already, or, rather, that they have not seen it for years past. But, they have been blinded by their foolish pride; that pride, which has nothing of mind belonging to it, and which, accompanied with a consciousness of a want of any natural superiority over the labouring classes, seeks to indulge itself in a species of vindictive exercise of power. There has come into the heads of these people, I cannot very well tell how, a notion, that it is proper to consider the labouring classes as a *distinct caste*. They are called, now-a-days, by these gentlemen, “*the Peasantry*.” This is a new term as applied to Englishmen. It is a French word, which, in its literal sense, means, *country folks*. But, in the sense in which it is used in France and Germany, it means, not only country people, or country folks, but also a *distinct and degraded class of persons*, who have no pretensions whatever to look upon themselves, in any sense, as belonging to the same

society, or community, as the Gentry; but who ought always to be "*kept down in their proper place.*" And, it has become, of late, the fashion to consider the labouring classes in England in the same light, and to speak of them and treat them accordingly, which never was the case in any former age.

"The writings of Malthus, who considers men as *mere animals*, may have had influence in the producing of this change; and, we now frequently hear the working classes called "*the population,*" just as we call the animals upon a farm "*the stock.*" It is curious, too, that this contumely towards the great mass of the people should have grown into vogue amongst the country gentlemen and their families, at a time when they themselves are daily and hourly losing the estates descended to them from their forefathers. They see themselves stript of the means of keeping up that hospitality for which England was once so famed, and of which there remains nothing but the word in the dictionary; they see themselves reduced to close up their windows, live in a corner of their houses, sneak away to London, crib their servants in their wages, and hardly able to keep up a little tawdry show; and it would seem that, for the contempt which they feel that their meanness must necessarily excite in the common people, they endeavour to avenge themselves, and at the same time to disguise their own humiliation, by their haughty and insolent deportment towards the latter,—thus exhibiting that mixture of poverty and of pride, which has ever been deemed better calculated than any other union of qualities, to draw down upon the possessors the most unfriendly of human feelings.

It is curious, also, that this fit of novel and ridiculous pride should have afflicted the minds of these persons at the very time that the working classes are become singularly enlightened. Not enlightened in the manner that the sons of Cant and Corruption would wish them to be. The conceited creatures in what is called high life, and who always judge of men by their clothes, imagine that the working classes of the people have their minds sufficiently occupied by the reading of what are called "*religious and moral tracts*"—simple, insipid dialogues and stories, calculated for the minds of children seven or eight years

old, or for those of savages just beginning to be civilized. These conceited persons have no idea that the minds of the working classes ever presume to rise above this infantine level. But these conceited persons are most grossly deceived: they are the "*deluded*" part of the community; deluded by a hireling and corrupt press, and by the conceit and insolence of their own minds. The working classes of the people understand well what they read; they dive into all matters connected with politics; they have a relish not only for interesting statement, for argument, for discussion; but the powers of *eloquence* are by no means lost upon them; and, in many, many instances, they have shown themselves to possess infinitely greater powers of describing and of reasoning, than have ever been shown generally by that description of persons, who, with Malthus, regard them as mere animals. In the report of the Secret Committee of the House of Lords, it is observed, that, since the people have betaken themselves to this reading and this discussing, "*their character seems to be wholly changed.*" I believe it is indeed! For it is the natural effect of enlightening the mind to change the character. But, is not this change for the better? If it be not, why have we heard so much about the efforts for instructing the children of the poor? Nay there are institutions for teaching *full-grown* persons to read and write; and a gentleman upon whose word I can rely, assured me, that in a school of this sort, in Norfolk, he actually saw one woman teaching another woman to read, and that both teacher and pupil had *spectacles upon their noses!* What then! Has it been intended, that these people, when taught to read, should read nothing but Hannah Moore's "*Sinful Sally*," and Mrs. Trimmer's Dialogues? Faith, the working classes of the people have a relish for no such trash. They are not to be amused by a recital of the manifold blessings of a state of things, in which they have not half enough to eat, nor half enough to cover their nakedness by day or to keep them from perishing by night. They are not to be amused with the pretty stories about "*the bounty of Providence in making brambles* for the purpose of tearing off pieces of the sheep's wool *in order* that the little birds may come and get it to line their nests with to keep their young ones warm!" Stories like these are

not sufficient to fill the minds of the working classes of the people. They want something more solid. They have had something more solid. Their minds, like a sheet of paper, have received the lasting impressions of undeniable fact and unanswerable argument; and it will always be a source of the greatest satisfaction to me to reflect, that I have been mainly instrumental in giving those impressions, which I am very certain, will never be effaced from the minds of the people of this country.

"Do those, who pretend to believe that the people are *deluded*, and who say these laws are not aimed *against the people*, but merely against their *seducers*; do those persons really imagine, that the people are *thus to be deceived*? Do they imagine, for instance, that the people who read my Register, will not in this case, regard any attack upon me, as an attack upon themselves? It is curious enough to observe how precisely the contrary the reasoning of these persons is in all other cases. An attack upon the clergy is always deemed by them to be an attack upon religion. An attack upon the King is always deemed by them to be an attack upon the Nation. And it is very notorious, that in all criminal cases, the language of the law is that the offence has been committed against the peace of the realm, and in contempt of the king, his crown and dignity. Yet in the present case, the *leaders* of the reformers are to be supposed to have no common interest with the reformers themselves; and it appears to be vainly imagined, that millions of men, all united in petitioning in the most peaceable and orderly manner for one particular object, will be easily persuaded to believe, that those *who have taken the lead* amongst them may be very properly sacrificed, and that, too, *without any injury at all to the cause*! What should we think of an enemy in the field, who were to send over a flag of truce, and propose to us to give up our *Generals*? Only our Generals! That is *all*! The enemy has no objection to *us*: it is only our Generals that he wants; and, then we shall have *peace* with him at once. There was once, the fable tells us, a war between the *Wolves* and the *Sheep*, the latter being well protected by a parcel of brave and skilful *Dogs*. The Wolves set on foot a negotiation, the object of which was everlasting

peace between the parties, and the proposition was, on the part of the Wolves that there should be *hostages* on both sides; that the Wolves should put their *young ones* into the hands of the Sheep, and the Sheep should put their *Dogs* into the hands of the Wolves. In an evil hour the Sheep agreed to this compact; and the very first opportunity, the Wolves, having no longer any Dogs to contend with, flew amongst the fleecy fools and devoured them and their lambs without mercy and without mitigation.

"The flocks of reformers in England are not to be "*deduced*" in this manner. They will well know, that every blow, which is aimed against the men who have taken the most prominent part in the cause of reform, is aimed against that cause itself and at every person who is attached to that cause, just as much, just as effectually, as a blow aimed at the head of a man is aimed at his fingers and his toes.

"The country gentlemen, therefore, will never see the day when the working classes will again be reconciled to them, unless they shall cordially take the lead amongst those working classes. This, I am in hopes, they will do? for every day of their lives will make their own inevitable ruin more and more manifest. But whether they do this or not, the consequences of the present measures will, I am convinced, be the same. They will only tend to make the catastrophe more dreadful than it would otherwise have been. The funding system will go regularly on producing misery upon the back of misery, and irritation upon the back of irritation. It is that great cause which is constantly at work. Nothing can stop its progress, short of a reduction of the interest of the debt; and as that measure seems to be rejected with obstinacy as persevering as are the destroying effects of the system itself, nothing can reasonably be expected but a violent dissolution.

"The nation will recollect how confidently the ministers spoke last year of a speedy restoration to prosperity. Mr. Vansittart talked in a very gay and flippant style about the raising of fourteen millions in taxes, in order to keep up the Sinking Fund, which fourteen millions, he said, would return back to the country to enliven manufactures, commerce, and agriculture. The words were hardly out of

his mouth, when I told you, that, if the fourteen millions^s did return back to the country, it would only be for the purpose of transferring fourteen millions worth more of the property of the land-owners, the ship-owners, the manufacturers, the farmers, and the traders, from them to the pockets of the fund-holders and the sinecure placemen and pensioners, together with all those who lived upon the taxes. But all the former classes are now become so reduced in point of property; all their property has so fallen in value, that they have now nothing to offer in pledge for the money which the fundholders have to lend them; and the consequence of this is, that we now behold the curious spectacle of a *loan* made by the fundholders to the *Government of France*. The loan is stated at *ten millions sterling*. And now, my friends, pray observe what a traffic is here going on! These ten millions of money have been raised in *taxes* upon us to pay the interest of the debt, or part of it. The fundholders having got this money into their possession, lend it to the Government of France, because we, who pay the taxes, are become too poor; our property is fallen too low in value for the fundholders to lend it to us; and thus ten millions' worth of the income of the gentlemen and of the fruits of the labour of the people, are conveyed over to another nation, which must tend to give life to agriculture and trade and manufactures in that nation, in just the same degree that the operation tends to depress and ruin our own country. To make this as clear as day-light, let us suppose *the Isle of Wight* to be cut off from all trade and all interchange of commodities with the rest of the kingdom. Let us suppose that all the people in the Isle of Wight are compelled to pay a great portion of their incomes and of the fruit of their labour every year to be sent over and expended in the rest of the kingdom; and that no part of what they thus pay is to go back again to the Isle of Wight, except the *interest* of it. Is it not evident, that the Isle of Wight must become most wretchedly poor and miserable? Will not the proprietors there get rid of their property as fast as they are able, and will not they get away into the other parts of the kingdom? Yes! and this is what the people of England are now doing with regard to France. The property of England is now going away, and all those

who are able and do not live upon the taxes, are following the property as fast as they can. To take a single instance; suppose me to be living in the parish of Botley, or rather, to suppose something nearer the reality, suppose Mr. Eyre, who does live there, and who, having a landed estate, to the amount, perhaps, of two or three thousand a year, and who, being a very good master, very hospitable and kind to all his neighbours, employing great numbers of them and expending the greater part of his clear income amongst them, were, instead of so expending his income, to lend it to the government of France, and to receive from that Government the *interest* only every year: it is clear, that instead of *two thousand* pounds a year to expend among his neighbours, he would have only *two hundred* pounds to expend amongst them. Here would be a falling off of eighteen hundred pounds a year, which, at thirty pounds per family, would take away the means of living from *sixty families*. If this mode of disposing of Mr. Eyre's income would deprive sixty families of the means of living, the loan which has been made to the Government of France by the *fundholders*, through the agency of the *Barings* and others, must deprive of the means of living *thirty-three thousand three hundred and thirty-three families*! And this is a truth, my good and perishing countrymen, which I defy the William Giffords, the apostate Southneys, and all the herd of sinecure and hired writers, to contravert. The *interest*, you will perceive, will come back again to England, and may possibly be expended amongst the people of England, but all the principal will be expended in France to animate French manufactures, commerce, trade, and agriculture, all of which will be fed by the ruin of England.

"The same will be going on, in other shapes, with regard to other foreign countries, and especially with regard to America. For can it be believed, that men, in the *farming* and *trading* line, will remain here to give their best shilling to the fundholders, and to see their families brought to the workhouse, while a country of freedom extends its arms to afford protection to their property as well as to their persons? At this very moment hundreds of *farmers* are actually preparing to remove themselves and their property to America, and many are now upon

the voyage. Now then, let us see what will be the effects of operations of this sort. A man who *rents* a farm, we will suppose, determines not to remain any longer under such a state of things. He sells off his stock, amounting, we will say, to five thousand pounds. He turns the stock into money, and he carries the money to America. In England he gave employment and paid in poor-rates the means of supporting about twelve or fourteen families. Whence are to come the means of supporting these families when he is gone? There is no one to *supply his place*; for there are thousands of farms now lying waste. These families must go to augment the already intolerable burden of the poor-rates; they must go to add to the immense mass of misery already existing, while the farmer himself, though he has lost, by the low price of his stock, two-thirds of his fortune, carries away the remainder, together with his valuable industry and skill, to add to the agriculture of America; to give employment to families there; to add to the population and power of that country; and to congratulate himself on his escape from ruinous taxation, and his family on their escape from the horrors of a poor-house. And who can *blame* such a man? He must still love his country; but the first law of nature, *self-preservation*, imperiously calls on him to abandon it for ever!

[Mr. Cobbett then goes on to say, that from these and other causes, the country must, as long as the same state of things continued, go on "declining and perishing,"—with its means daily diminishing,—and having no remedy for the evil but that of nearly annihilating the National Debt, and of reducing nine-tenths of the expenses of maintaining the army, for which army, indeed, there would be no occasion but for the debt. The great question was whether the boroughmongers should carry on the military and suspension system after the funding system should be destroyed. This order of things,—an immense standing army, with corps of yeomanry all over the country, with the press under the superintendence of the magistrates, and with the personal safety of every man taken from him, he called the *Boroughmongering System*; notoriously adopted for the purpose of crushing the Reformers. The funding system could not last long. No measures, no

powers, no events, could save it from destruction at the end of a few years. The vital question was, whether the boroughmongering system could support itself amidst all the uproar and turmoil of the breaking up of the funding system, and whether it could consolidate itself in this country,—a question which would settle the fate of England, but the solution of which appeared to be more difficult than any other that had ever presented itself to his mind.—A change had already taken place in the tone of those who talked so boldly about the endless resources of the country. They began to falter, and were frightened at the work of their own hands. Though surrounded with all the securities of an army and of the absolute power of imprisonment act, still they trembled within, and were scared at the desolation they had brought upon the country. They were compelled to smile upon the fundholders, and yet they would fain that there were no such people in existence; and, being baffled in all their projects and prospects, they knew not which way to turn themselves. It had been their project to cause the Bank to pay again in specie: but it appeared to be now their project to get fresh quantities of paper afloat. This, however, would be difficult if not impossible of accomplishment, seeing that the proprietors of lands and of goods had nothing to offer in security for it; and besides, if it were effected, it would be equal to reducing the value of the currency one-third, and would in fact be a proportionate breach of all contracts. The discredit of the paper money would become so notorious, that the people of all foreign nations would keep aloof from it, and would exclaim, "*Babylon the great has fallen!*"

After some more observations on the question of the currency, and after reiterating his reasons for quitting England for America, and cautioning the people as to the calumnies which would be published against him in his absence, Mr. Cobbett concludes his farewell address as follows]:—

"A mutual affection, a powerful impulse, will, I hope, always exist between me and my hard-used countrymen; an affection, which my heart assures me, no time, no distance, no new connections, no new association of ideas, however enchanting, can ever destroy, or, in any degree,

enfeeble or impair. The sight of a free, happy, well fed, and well clad people, will only tend to invigorate my efforts to assist in restoring you to the enjoyment of those rights and of that happiness, which are so well merited, by your honesty, your sincerity, your skill in all the useful arts, your kind-heartedness, your valour, and all the virtues which you possess in so supereminent a degree. A splendid mansion in America will be an object less dear to me than a cottage on the skirts of Waltham Chace or of Botley Common. Never will I own as my friend him who is not a friend of the people of England. I will never become a *subject* or a *citizen* in any other state, and will always be a *foreigner* in every country but England. Any foible that may belong to your character, I shall always willingly allow to belong to my own. All the celebrity which my writings have obtained, and which they will preserve, long and long after Lords Liverpool and Sidmouth and Castlereagh are rotten and forgotten, I owe less to my own talents than to that discernment and that noble spirit in you, which have at once instructed my mind and warmed my heart: and, my beloved countrymen, be you well assured, that the last beatings of that heart will be, love for the people, for the happiness and the renown, of England; and hatred of their corrupt, hypocritical, dastardly, and merciless foes. * * *

“The beautiful country through which I have lately travelled, bearing, upon every inch of it, such striking marks of the industry and skill of the people, never can be destined to be inhabited by slaves. To suppose such a thing possible would be at once to libel the nation and to blaspheme against Providence.

“WM. COBBETT.”

“*Liverpool 28th March, 1827.*”

Whilst this farewell address was being read by his numerous friends and admirers in England, Mr. Cobbett was proceeding as a fugitive and a wanderer towards those shores which he had quitted a few years before with disgust and indignation. Now, however, his political opinions had undergone a most important change,—he was no longer an admirer of extravagant monarchies and heartless

and dishonest ministers. He had learned to look upon the free institutions of America with a less prejudiced eye, and, hasty as his natural temperament was, he thus suddenly resolved to take up his future abode in that land whose civil and religious liberty he now admired with all the ardour of a Franklin or a Washington. He sighed indeed, for the land he had left, probably for ever, but, when he thought of the wrongs that he had endured, and of the persecutions that had for years past haunted him, his patriotism gradually subsided, and he looked forward with something of hope to days that should afford him more happiness in that country to which he was flying for refuge. It is true that his tenderest feelings were yet turned towards the comfortable home he had just left, and his mind was ever fondly fixed upon his wife and children, the partners in all his griefs, with an affection that neither time nor intervening distance could efface from his mind, yet, looking forward to happier days, he hoped soon to have them with him in whatever place he might fix upon for his future residence. He was, however, too prudent to wish them with him till he should have an opportunity of providing for them all those comforts which he had always made it his chief pride to share with them. He knew that he should have many difficulties to contend against at first, and therefore wisely resolved that they should not follow him to America until he had made smooth the rugged path that was before him, and had provided those comforts in the land of the stranger which they had known in the country of their home and birth. Besides, he himself still had a lingering desire to return at some future period or other to England—he believed that the malice of his enemies would not endure for ever, and he resolved, should an opportunity ever arrive, to return and wear out the remainder of his days in the clime where he had first drawn the breath of life.

This, to many persons who knew not Cobbett's character thoroughly, may appear an erroneous assertion on our part. They may imagine, that his mind was not susceptible of these tender emotions—that, in fact he was too much a citizen of the world to care anything about where he might be placed, so long as the locality answered his expectations and held out fair promise for the future

Cobbett was not a man of this kind—his manners might appear rough and somewhat uncourteous to those who knew him not most intimately—but it was his manner and not his disposition to be so. He had been brought up in the rough school of adversity—had experienced more difficulty and trouble than usually falls to the lot of mankind,—and had felt in its fullest force the rod of vengeance that had been so frequently applied by his merciless and unfeeling enemies. That his temper and feelings were of the best order we have numerous instances both in his domestic relations and those of the more active scenes of his life. But why need we urge the point? the fact is known to all who had the honour of his acquaintance, and in their hands we leave the task of confirming our assertion.

Having seen him embarked for America, we will now pause in the narrative and give a vivid picture of this man from his own writings.

"I wrote for fame, says Mr. Cobbett in after life, and was urged forward by ill-treatment, and by the desire to triumph over my enemies; but, after all, a very large part of my *nearly a hundred volumes* may be fairly ascribed to the wife and children.

I might have done *something*: but, perhaps, a *thousandth* part of what I have done; not even a *thousandth* part; for the chances are, that I, being fond of a military life, should have ended my days ten or twenty years ago, in consequence of wounds, or fatigue, or more likely in consequence of some haughty and insolent fool, whom nature had formed to black my shoes, and whom a system of corruption had made my commander. *Love* came and rescued me from this state of horrible slavery; placed the whole of my time at my own disposal; made me as free as air; removed every restraint upon the operations of the mind, naturally disposed to communicate its thoughts to others; and gave me for my leisure hours, a companion, who, though deprived of all opportunity of acquiring what is called *learning*, had so much good sense, so much useful knowledge, was so innocent, so just in all her ways, so pure in thought, word and deed, so disinterested, so generous, so devoted to me and her children, so free from all disguise, and withal so beautiful and so talkative, and in a voice so sweet, so cheering, that I must, seeing the health

and the capacity which it had pleased God to give me, have been a *criminal*, if I had done much less than that which I have done; and I have always said, that, if my country feel any gratitude for my labours, that gratitude is due to her full as much as to me.

“*Care!* What *care* have I known! I have been buffeted about by this powerful and vindictive Government; I have repeatedly had the fruit of my labour snatched away from me by it; but I had a partner that never frowned, that was never melancholy, that never was subdued in spirit, that never abated a smile, on these occasions, that fortified me, and sustained me by her courageous example, and that was just as busy and zealous in taking care of the remnant as she had been in taking care of the whole; just as cheerful, and just as full of caresses, when brought down to a mean hired lodging, as when the mistress of a fine country house, with all its accompaniments; and, whether from her words or looks, no one could gather that she regretted the change. What “*cares*” have I had then? What have I had worth the name of “*carcs*”?

“And, how is it *now*? How is it when the *sixty-fourth* year has come? And how should I have been without this wife and these children? I *might* have amassed a tolerable heap of *money*; but what would that have done for me? It might have *bought* me plenty of *professions* of attachment; plenty of persons impatient for my exit from the world; but not one single grain of sorrow, for any anguish that might have attended my approaching end. To me, no being in this world appears so wretched as an *Old Bachelor*.”

Mr. Cobbett's habits of Living.—The reader may form a tolerable idea from the following account extracted from his own works,—“Who, what man, ever performed a greater quantity of labour than I have performed? What man ever did so much? Now, in a great measure, I owe my capability to perform this labour to my disregard of dainties. Being shut up two years in Newgate, with a fine on my head of a thousand pounds to the king, for having expressed my indignation at the flogging of Englishmen under a guard of German bayonets, I ate, during one year, one mutton chop every day. Being once in town, with one son (then a little boy) and a clerk, while my family was in the country, I had during some weeks nothing but legs of mut-

ton; first day, leg of mutton boiled or roasted: second: *cold*; third, *hashed*; then leg of mutton *boiled*: and so on. When I have been by myself, or nearly so, I have always proceeded thus: give directions for having *every day the same thing*, or alternately as above, and every day exactly at the same hour, so as to prevent the necessity of any talk about the matter. I am certain that, upon an average I have not, during my life, spent more than *thirty-five minutes a day at table*, including all the meals of the day. I like, and I take care to have, good and clean victuals: but, if wholesome and clean, that is enough. If I find it, by chance, *too coarse* for my appetite, I put the food aside, or let somebody do it, and leave the appetite to gather keenness. But the great security of all is, to eat *little* and to drink nothing that *intoxicates*.

Of the Education of his Children.—He gives a description which we should be glad to be followed by parents in general; these are his own words:—"But, to do the things I did, you must love home yourself; to rear up children in this manner, you must live with them; you must make them, too, feel by your conduct, that you prefer this to any other mode of passing your time. All men cannot lead this sort of life, but many may: and all much more than many do. My occupation, to be sure, is chiefly carried on at home; but I had always enough to do, I never spent an idle week, or even day, in my whole life. Yet I found time to talk with them, to walk, or ride about with them; and when forced to go from home always took one or more with me. You must be good-tempered too with them; they must like your company better than any other person's; they must not wish you away, nor fear your coming back, nor look upon your departure as a holiday. When my business kept me away from the scribbling-table, a petition often came, that I would go and talk with the group, and the bearer generally was the youngest, being the most likely to succeed. When I went from home, all followed me to the outer gate, and looked after me, till the carriage, or horse was out of sight. At the time appointed for my return, all were prepared to meet me; and if it were late at night, they sat up as long as they were able to keep their eyes open. This kind of parents and

this constant pleasure at home, made them not even think of seeking pleasure abroad; and they, thus, were kept from various playmates and early corruption.

"This is an age, too, to teach children to be *trust-worthy* and to be *merciful* and *humane*. We lived in a garden of about two acres, partly kitchen-garden with walls, partly shrubbery and trees, and partly grass. There were the peaches, as tempting as any that ever grew, and yet as safe from fingers as if no child were ever in the garden. It is not necessary to forbid. The blackbirds, the thrushes, the whitethroats, and even that very shy bird the goldfinch, had their nests and bred up their young ones, in great abundance, all about this little spot, constantly the play place of six children; and one of the latter had its nest, and brought up its young ones, in a raspberry bush, within two yards of a walk, and at the same time that we were gathering the ripe raspberries. We give dogs, and justly, great credit for sagacity and memory; but the following two most curious instances, which I should not venture to state, if there were not so many witnesses to the facts, in my neighbours at Botley, as well as in my own family, will show, that birds are not, in this respect, inferior to the canine race. All country people know that the skylark is a very shy bird; that its abode is the open fields: that it settles on the ground only; that it seeks safety in the wideness of space; that it avoids enclosures, and is never seen in gardens. A part of our ground was a grass-plat of about forty rods, or a quarter of an acre, which, one year, was left to be mowed for hay. A pair of larks, coming out of the fields into the middle of a pretty populous village, chose to make their nest in the middle of this little spot, and at not more than about thirty-five yards from one of the doors of the house, in which there were about twelve persons living, and six of those children who had constant access to all parts of the ground. There we saw the cock rising up and singing, then taking his turn upon the eggs; and by-and-by, we observed him cease to sing, and saw them both *constantly engaged in bringing food to the young ones*. No unintelligible hint to the fathers and mothers of the human race, who might before marriage, have taken delight in music. But the time came for mowing the grass! I waited a good many days for the brood to

get away; but, at last, I determined on the day; and if the larks were there still, to leave a patch of grass standing round them. In order not to keep them in dread longer than necessary, I brought three able mowers, who would cut the whole in about an hour; and as the plat was nearly circular, set them to mow round, beginning at the outside. And now for sagacity indeed! The moment the men began to whet their scythes, the two old larks began to flutter over the nest, and to make a great clamour. When the men began to mow, they flew round and round, stooping so low, when near the men, almost to touch their bodies, making a great clattering at the same time; but before the men had got round with the second swarth, they flew to the nest, and away they went, young ones and all, across the river, at the foot of the ground, and settled in the long grass in my neighbour's orchard.

“The other instance relates to a HOUSE-MARTEN. It is well known that these birds build their nests under the eaves of inhabited houses, and sometimes under those of door porches; but we had one that built its nest *in the hovie*, and upon the top of a common door-case, the door of which opened into a room out of the main passage into the house. Perceiving the marten had begun to build its nest here, we kept the front-door open in the day time: but were obliged to fasten it at night. It went on, had eggs, young ones, and the young ones flew. I used to open the door in the morning early, and then the birds carried on their affairs till night. The next year the MARTEN came again, and had *another brood in the same place*. It found its old nest; and having repaired it, and put it in order, went on again in the former way; and it would, I dare say have continued to come to the end of its life, if we had remained there so long, notwithstanding there were six healthy children in the house, making just as much noise as they pleased.

“Now what *sagacity* in these birds to discover that those were places of safety! And how happy must it have made us, the parents, to be *sure* that our children had thus deeply imbibed habits the contrary of cruelty! For be it engraved on your heart, YOUNG MAN, that whatever appearances may say to the contrary, *cruelty* is always attended with *cowardice*, and also with *perfidy*, when that is called for by the

circumstances of the case; and that *habitual* acts of cruelty to other creatures, will, nine times out of ten, produce, when the power is possessed, cruelty to human beings. The ill-usage of *horses*, and particularly *asses*, is a grave and just charge against this nation. No other nation on earth is guilty of it to the same extent. Not only by *blows*, but privation, are we cruel towards useful docile and patient creatures; and especially towards the last, which is the most docile and laborious of the two, while the food that satisfies it, is of the coarsest and least costly kind, and in quantity so small! In the habitual ill-treatment of this animal, which, in addition to all its labour, has the milk taken from its young ones to administer a remedy for our ailments, there is something that bespeaks *ingratitude* hardly to be described. In a REGISTER that I wrote from Long Island, I said, that amongst all things of which I had been bereft, I regretted no one so much as a very diminutive *mare*, on which my children had all, in succession, learned to ride. She was become useless for them, and, indeed, for any other purpose; but the recollection of her was so entwined with so many past circumstances, which at that distance, my mind conjured up, that I really was very uneasy, lest she should fall into cruel hands. By good luck, she was, after a while, turned out on the wide world to shift for herself; and when we got back, and had a place for her to *stand* in, from her native forest we brought her to Kensington, and she is now at Barn-Elm, about twenty-six years old, and I dare say, as fat as a mole. Now, not only have I no moral *right* (considering my ability to pay for keep) to deprive her of life; but it would be *unjust* and *ungrateful*, in me, to withhold from her sufficient food and lodging to make life as pleasant as possible while that life lasts.

"In meanwhile the book-learning *crept on* of its own accord, by imperceptible degrees, Children naturally want to be *like* their parents, and to *do what do they*: the boys following their father, and the girls their mother; and as I was always *writing* or *reading*, mine naturally desired to do something in the same way. But, at the same time, they heard no talk from *fools* or *drinkers*: saw me with no idle, gabbling, empty companions; saw no vain and affected coxcombs, and no tawdry and extravagant women; saw no

nasty gormandizing; and heard no gabble about play-houses and romances and the other nonsense that fits boys to be lobby-loungers and girls to be the ruin of industrious and frugal young men.

"We wanted no stimulants of this sort to *keep our spirits up*: our various pleasing pursuits were quite sufficient for that; and the *book-learning* came among the rest of the pleasures, to which it was, in some sort, necessary. I remember that, one year, I raised a prodigious crop of fine *melons*, under hand-glasses; and I learned how to do it from a gardening *book*; or, at least, that book was necessary to remind me of the details. Having passed part of an evening in talking to the boys about getting this crop, "Come," said I, "now, let us *read the book*." Then the book came forth, and to work we went, following very strictly the precepts of the book. I read the thing but once, but the eldest boy read it, perhaps, twenty times over; and explained all about the matter to the others. Why here was a *motive*! Then he had to tell the garden labourer *what to do* to the melons. Now, I will engage, that more was really *learned* by this single *lesson*, than would have been learned by spending, at this son's age, a year at school: and he *happy* and *delighted* all the while. When any dispute arose among them about hunting or shooting, or any other of their pursuits, they, by degrees, found out the way of settling it by reference to some book; and when any difficulty occurred, as to the meaning, they referred to me, who, if at home, *always instantly attended to them*, in these matters.

"They began writing by taking words out of printed books; finding out which letter was which, by asking me, or asking those who knew the letters one from another; and by imitating bits of my writing it is surprising how soon they began to write a hand like mine, very small, very faint-stroked, and nearly plain as print. The first use that any of them made of the pen, was to write to me, though in the same house with them. They began doing this in mere scratches, before they knew how to make any one letter; and as I was always folding up letters and directing them, so were they; and they were sure to receive a prompt answer, with most encouraging compliments. All the meddlings and teasing of friends, and, what was

more serious, the pressing prayers of their anxious mother, about sending them to *school*, I withstood without the slightest effects on my resolution. As to friends, preferring my own judgement to theirs, I did not care much; but an expression of anxiety, implying a doubt of the soundness of my judgment, coming, perhaps, twenty times a day from her whose care they were as well as mine, was not a matter to smile at, and very great trouble it did give me. My answer at last was, as to the boys, I want them to be *like me*; and as to the girls, in whose hands can they be so safe as in *yours*? Therefore my resolution is taken, *go to school they shall not.*"

After reading the preceding extracts from his own writings, who will be found bold enough to assert that Cobbetts feelings were not of the highest and most refined order? Who will say that he was not a good husband, a good father, and a most excellent citizen?—Why his whole writings abound with instances that would prove his excellence to the satisfaction of all persons, except his most violent political enemies who most uncharitably endeavour to cry him down, by propagating the basest calumnies that ever were invented against any man. And why do they this?—marry, because he differed with them on all those subjects in which they are mostly bigoted—because he took a liberal view of the rights and privileges of mankind, and because he had the temerity to expose the evil doings of dishonest men, when no other writer could be found bold enough to execute the task. But he lived to see his own reward—part of the evil fabric that had been raised by bad ministers fell before him, and each day that he lived he could easily foresee the quickly approaching downfall of the whole system against which he had worked so long and patiently.

As to another charge,—the imputation of Mr. Cobbett having been influenced throughout his life by selfish and mercenary motives, is almost too vague to be grappled with, but we may ask, if such had been his governing feelings—if sordid gain had been his object, or courtly applause and honour his ambition, is it credible that he would have failed to secure them? His political hostility was as dangerous as his advocacy was useful.

None could afford to despise his attacks, and none were so short-sighted as to undervalue his services. We have already spoken of the testimony borne to the value of his writings by Mr. Windham, from his place in the House of Commons; and is it too much to presume that if a single article from his pen was deemed to be worth "a statue of gold," he might have sold his pen *in perpetuo* for a profusion of riches? Surely, those who estimated so highly the literary services of Burke as to confer upon him and his descendants an annual pension, would gladly have purchased the powerful support of such a writer as Cobbett.—Mr. Cobbett always averred that he sought nothing for himself—that he would accept nothing for himself; and the unceasing toil to which he was compelled to submit, through a long course of years, to support his family and maintain a decent independence demonstrably frees him from the imputation of ever having taken a bribe.

In his early education, and in the circumstances of his after-life, will be found enough to explain the temper, as they explain the direction of his political course. There is undoubtedly, a discipline which strengthens the genius, while it polishes the manners, but this is the reasoning discipline; it is the regimen which, from childhood, teaches to control our passions and dispositions—not under the influence of fear, but from a sense of what is virtuous and becoming. Men trained in this discipline acquire an art of self-government, which qualifies them to exercise any power which they may possess over others, with a gentleness, and consideration for human weakness, which no teacher but the early liberalized self-love can impart. There is, however, a discipline of another kind, which often breaks, though not always, intellectual power, but which is sure to unfit him who has been subject to it for the exercise of power; this is the discipline of force. To this last discipline Mr. Cobbett was unfortunately subjected during that whole period in which the formation of character is completed. There is no reasoning in the obedience of the farm yard; there is no reasoning in the discipline of the barracks; and up to his thirtieth year, Mr. Cobbett suffered one or other of these forms of slavery. The

very same cause which renders the harshly-reared orphan a domestic tyrant—the foremost man or the late private, a harsh officer—the military man of any class a functionary almost too severe for civil life—the emancipated slave the cruellest of slave-drivers; this same cause would, naturally, give to the polemics of a powerful disputant, all the intolerant asperity with which Mr. Cobbett's writings have been charged.

Having entered thus into the character and habits of Mr. Cobbett, we will now take him to the end of his voyage and land him once more in America, after an absence from that country of about seventeen years.

It was on the 5th of May 1817 that Mr. Cobbett landed at New York in the neighbourhood of which city he had determined to settle himself. Here, however, he did not long remain in idleness, for, notwithstanding the fatigue he had lately undergone, he went over on the following day, where meeting with a farm that exactly answered his views, he immediately engaged it and, within a short time afterwards was once more comfortably settled in that business of life which seems so happily to have accorded with his nature and disposition. At this period his life seems to have been devoted to his agricultural pursuits; he appears almost to have dropped the character of politician, though now and then throughout his Journal, which he kept, and afterwards published, we find occasional remarks on by-gone and passing event. As this Journal contains much curious information as to his habits at this period, we will glean from it some of the passages that will best serve to continue our narrative of this extraordinary man. The first paragraph we shall take bears the date of

July 10, 1817. Fine hot day. I work in the land morning and evening, and write in the day in a north room. The *dress* is now become a very convenient, or, rather, a very little inconvenient, affair. Shoes, trousers, shirt and hat. No plague of dressing and undressing.

July 21. Fine hot day; but heavy rain at night.

Flics a few. Not more than in England. My son John, who has just returned from Pennsylvania, says they are as great a torment there as ever. At a friend's house,

(a farm house) there, *two quarts of flies* were caught in one house *in one window in one day!* I do not believe that there are two quarts in all my premises. But then I cause all *wash and slops* to be carried forty yards from the house, I suffer no peelings or greens, or any rubbish, to lie near the house. I suffer no fresh meat to remain more than one day fresh in the house. I proscribe all fish. Do not suffer a dog to enter the house. Keep all pigs at a distance of sixty yards. And sweep all round about once every week at least.

July 27.—Some friends from England here to day, We spent a pleasant day! drank success to the debt, and destruction to the Boroughmongers, in gallons of milk and water.

August 1.—Very, very hot. I take off two shirts a day wringing wet. I have a clothes horse to hang them on to dry. Drink about twenty good tumblers of milk and water every day. No ailments. Head always clear. Go to bed by daylight very often. Just after the hens go to roost, and rise again with them.

August 17.—Fine hot day. Very hot. I fight the Borough villains, stripped to my shirt, and with nothing on besides but shoes and trousers. Never ill! no headaches! no muddled brains. *The milk and water* is a great cause of this. I live on salads, other garden vegetables, apple puddings and pies, butter, cheese, eggs and bacon. Resolved to have no more fresh meat till cooler weather comes. Those who have a mind to swallow, or be swallowed by *flies* may eat fresh meat for me.

October 7.—Beautiful day, sixty-one degrees in the shade. Have not put on a coat yet. Wear thin stockings or socks, waistcoat with sleeves, and neckcloth.

January 10, 1818.—I am now at New York, on my way to Pennsylvania. N. B. This journey into Pennsylvania had, for its principal object, an appeal to the justice of the legislature of that State for redress for great loss and injury sustained by me, nearly twenty years ago, in consequence of the tyranny of one M^r Kean, who was then the Chief Justice of that State. The appeal has not yet been successful; but, as I confidently expect that it finally will, I shall not, at present, say anything more on the subject.

January 15.—The question eagerly put to me by every one in Philadelphia is:—Don't you think the city *greatly improved?* They seem to me to confound *augmentation* with *improvement*. It always was a fine city, since I first knew it; and it is very greatly augmented. It has, I believe, nearly doubled its extent and number of houses since the year 1799. But, after being so long a time familiar with London, every other place appears little. After living within a few hundred yards of Westminster Hall, and the Abbey Church, and the Bridge, and looking from my own window into St. James's Park, all other buildings and spots appear mean and insignificant. I went to day to see the house I formerly occupied. How small! It is always thus: the words *large* and *small* are carried about with us in our minds, and we forget real dimensions. The idea, such as it was received, remains during our absence from the object. When I returned to England in 1800, after an absence from the country parts of it, of sixteen years, the trees, the hedges, even the parks and woods, seemed so *small*! It made me laugh to hear little gutters, that I could jump over, called *rivers*! The Thames was but a *creek*. But, when, in about a month after my arrival in London I went to Farnham, the place of my birth, what was my surprise! Everything was become so pitifully small! I had to cross in my post-chaise, the long and dreary heath of Bagshot. Then, at the end of it to mount a hill, called Hungry Hill; and from that hill I knew that I should look down into the beautiful and fertile vale of Farnham. My heart fluttered with impatience, mixed with a sort of fear, to see all the scenes of my childhood; for I had learned before, the death of my father and mother. There is a hill, not far from the town, called Crooksbury Hill, which rises up out of a flat, in the form of a cone, and is planted with Scotch fir trees. Here I used to take the eggs and young ones of crows and magpies. This hill was a famous object in the neighbourhood. It served as the superlative degree of height "*As high as Crooksbury Hill,*" meant with us the utmost degree of height. Therefore the first object that my eyes sought was this hill. *I could not believe my eyes?* Literally speaking, I, for a moment, thought the

famous hill removed, and a little heap put in its stead ! for I had seen in New Brunswick, a single rock, or hill of solid rock, ten times as big, and four or five times as high ! The post boy, going down hill, and not a bad road, whisked me, in a few minutes to the Bush Inn, from the garden of which I could see the prodigious sand hill, where I had begun my gardening works. What a nothing ! But now come rushing into my mind, all at once, my pretty little garden, my little blue smock frock, my little nailed shoes, my pretty pigeons that I used to feed out of my hands, the last kind words and tears of my gentle and tender-hearted and affectionate mother ! I hastened back into the room. If I had looked a moment longer, I should have dropped. When I came to reflect, what a change ! I looked down on my dress. What a change ! What scenes I had gone through ! How altered my state ! I had dined the day before at a Secretary of State's, in company with *Mr. Pitt*, and had been waited upon by men in gaudy liveries ; I had had nobody to assist me in the world. No teachers of any sort. Nobody to shelter me from the consequence of bad, and no one to counsel me to good behaviour. I felt proud. The distinctions of rank, birth and wealth, all became nothing in my eyes ; and from that moment (less than a month after my arrival in England) I resolved never to bend before them.

January 22.—My business in Pennsylvania is with the legislature. It is sitting at Harrisburgh. Set off to-day by stage. Fine country, fine barns, fine farms. Got to Lancaster, the largest inland town in the United States.

January 25.—Harrisburgh is a new town, close on the left bank of the river Susquehannah.

January 27.—Tired to death of the tavern at Harrisburgh, though a very good one. The cloth spread three times a day. Here we meet together : senators, judges, lawyers, tradesmen, farmers, and all. I am weary of the everlasting loads of meat. Weary of being idle. How few such days have I spent in my whole life !

January 28.—My business not coming on, I went to a country tavern, hoping there to get a room to myself, in which to read my English papers, and sit down

to writing. I am now at M'Allister's tavern. Great enjoyment here. Sit and read and write. My mind is again in England. Mrs. M'Allister just suits me. Does not pester me with questions. Does not cram me with meat. Lets me eat and drink what I like, and when I like, and gives mugs of nice milk. I find her a very agreeable companion in Mr. M'Allister the elder.

February 4.—This day thirty-three years ago, I enlisted as a soldier; I always keep the day in recollection.

February 12.—Not being able to bear the idea of *dancing attendance*, came to Lancaster, in order to see more of this pretty town. A very fair tavern, room to myself, excellent accommodations; the eating still more overdone than at Harrisburg; never saw such a profusion. I have made a bargain with the landlord, he is to give me a dish of Chocolate a day, *instead of dinner*.

February 16.—Lancaster is a pretty place, no *fine* buildings, but no mean ones; nothing *splendid* and nothing *beggarly*. The people of this town seem to have had the prayer of Hagar granted them; "Give me, O Lord, neither *poverty* nor *riches*." Here are none of those poor, wretched habitations, which sicken the sight at the outskirts of cities and town in England; those abodes of the poor creatures who have been reduced to beggary by the cruel extortions of the rich and powerful. And this remark applies to all the towns of America that I have ever seen. This is a fine part of America; big barns and modest dwelling houses. Barns of *stone a hundred feet long*, and *forty* wide, with two floors, and raised roads to go into them, so that the waggons go into the *first floor up-stairs*. Below are stables, stalls, pens, and all sorts of conveniences. Up-stairs are rooms for threshed corn and grain; for tackle, for meal, for all sorts of things. In the front (south) of the barn is the cattle yard. There are very fine buildings, and then all about them looks so comfortable, gives such manifest proofs of ease, plenty and happiness.

February 17.—Went back to Harrisburgh.

February 19.—Quitted Harrisburgh, very much displeased; but, on this subject, I shall, if possible, keep silence, till next year, and until the people of Pennsylvania have had time to reflect; to clearly understand my

affair, and when they *do understand it*, I am not at all afraid of receiving justice at their hands, whether I am present or absent. Slept at Lancaster.

February 20.—Hard frost. Arrived at Philadelphia along with my friend Hulme, they are *roasting an Ox on the Delaware*. The fooleries of England are copied here, and every where in this country, with wonderful avidity; and I wish I could say, that some of the vices of our "*higher orders*," as they have the impudence to call themselves, were not also imitated; however, I look principally at the mass of farmers; the sensible and happy farmers of America.

March 1.—Dined with my old friend Severne, an honest Norfolk man, who used to carry his milk about the streets, when I first knew him, but who is now a man of considerable property, and like a wise man, lives in the same modest house where he formerly lived. Excellent roast beef and plum pudding. At his house I found an Englishman, and from Botley too! I had been told of such a man being in Philadelphia, and that the man said, that he had heard of me, "*heard of such a gentleman, but did not know much of him*." This was odd! I was desirous seeing this man. Mr. Severne got him to his house. His name is Vere. I knew him the moment I saw him; and I wondered *why* it was that he *knew so little of me*. I found that he wanted work, and that he had been assisted by some society in Philadelphia. He said he was *lame*, and he might be a little, perhaps. *I offered him work at once*. No: he wanted to have the *care* of a farm! "Go," said I, "for shame, and ask some farmers for work, You will find it immediately, and with good wages. What should the people in this country see in your face to induce them to keep you in idleness. They did not send for you. You are a young man, and you come from a country of able labourers. You may be rich if you will work. This gentleman who is now about to cram you with roast beef and plum pudding came to this city nearly as poor as you are; and, I first came to this country in no better plight. Work and I wish you well; be idle and you ought to starve." He told me then that he was a *hoop-maker*; and, yet, observe, he wanted to have the *care* of a farm.

March 11.—I am now at Trenton, in New Jersey, waiting for something to carry me on towards New York. Yesterday Mr. Townsend sent me on, under an escort of Quakers, to Mr. Anthony Taylor's. Here my escort left me; but luckily, Mr. Newbold, who lives about ten miles nearer Trenton than Mr. Taylor does, brought me on to his house. But my vehicle is come, and now I bid adieu to Trenton, which I should have liked better, if I had not seen so many young fellows lounging about the streets, and leaning against door-posts, with quids of tobacco in their mouths, or segars stuck between their lips, and with dirty hands and faces. Mr. Birkbeck's complaint, on this score, is perfectly just.

Brunswick, New Jersey.—Here I am after a ride of about thirty miles since two o'clock, in what is called a Jersey-waggon, through such mud as I never saw before. Up to the stock of the wheel; and yet a pair of very little horses have dragged us through it in the space of *five hours*. The best horses and driver, and the worst roads I ever set my eyes on. This part of Jersey is a sad spectacle after leaving the brightest of all the bright parts of Pennsylvania. My driver, who is a tavern keeper himself, would have been a very pleasant companion, if he had not drank so much spirits on the road. This is the great misfortune of America! As we were going up a hill very slowly, I could perceive him looking very hard at my cheek for some time. At last, he said: "I am wondering, sir, to see you look so fresh and so young, considering what you have gone through in the world." Though I cannot imagine how he had learnt who I was. "I'll tell you," said I, "how I have contrived the thing—I rise early, go to bed early, eat sparingly, never drink anything stronger than small beer, shave once a day, and wash my hands and face three times a day at the very least." He said that was too much to think of doing.

March 13.—A fine open day, came to New York by the steam boat. Over to this Island, (Long Island) by another, took a light waggon that whisked me home over roads as dry and as smooth as gravel walks in an English bishop's garden in the month of July. Great contrast with the bottomless mud of New Jersey!

In this happy, easy manner Mr. Cobbett continued to

pass his ever active life at his farm called Hyde Park, on Hampstead Plains, Long Island. At length however, misfortune once more pursued him; on the 30th of May, 1819, a fire broke out in his mansion house, and the whole building was burnt to the ground, thus rendering him houseless, and almost broken in spirits in a land far distant from that of his birth, and to which his thoughts had ever been turned during this period of his self banishment, with the feelings of a child who has been forced from the parents whom he has revered and almost worshipped. To poor Cobbett this was a bitter trial, indeed!—He had lived, in some degree, to triumph over the most inveterate malice of his enemies.—He had seen them quail at the thunder of his voice when he raised it to denounce bad men and their evil actions.—He had, it is true, been made to suffer heavily both in purse and person for the boldness of these attacks, yet still his courage forsook him not even in the hour of his deepest affliction. The present affliction, however, seems to have occasioned him more grief than had ever before fallen to his share. In a few hours he had seen his comfortable home reduced by the flames to a heap of ashes. The picture of happiness that had been lately presented to his view, had suddenly vanished.—His home was destroyed, and with it a great part of the farming stock, corn, hay, &c. were reduced to a heap of mouldering ashes. Cobbett looked around him, and his heart was chilled at the black scene of desolation that presented itself. America had lost the charm that once captivated him;—his home was gone, and his thoughts recurring once more to England, he immediately began to entertain serious thoughts of returning to the land of his birth, which he still ardently loved in spite of the fierce persecutions that had ever followed him there.

In forming this resolution a thousand lurking dangers that might there await him, arose in his mind. He knew full well the powerful enemies he would have to cope with in this country, and the extent to which their vindictive feelings would probably lead them. But he also knew that since he had left England a very great change had taken place. The Reformers had every where mustered in great numbers, and, confident in the justness of their demands, had assumed an appearance of boldness

that had terrified the members of the government and more than half ensured their own ultimate success. In all the northern provinces of England these patriots had exhibited themselves in great strength, and though the ministers had succeeded in arresting and punishing some of the boldest among the advocates of Reform, it was now become apparent to all,—even to those who had been most adverse to it—that the day was not far distant when some measure must be introduced to satisfy the loud and incessant demands that were being made for a more just and equitable representation in Parliament. With this cheering prospect before him, Cobbett at once resolved to return to England, where he hoped his own presence and influence might hasten a consummation most devoutly to be wished.

In the course of his present short residence in America he had conceived the idea that it might be possible to cultivate and rear the locust tree, and the corn plant in this country. To effect this desirable object he was at any rate, to try his best and the success he met with is now known to the whole of our readers. His introduction into this country of the corn-plant and the locust-tree, and the invention for plaiting and making articles of clothing of English grass, should, of themselves cause him to be remembered with gratitude as a benefactor of his country. While the wise men of England despise the advantages Mr. Cobbett alleges to be derivable from some of these, the Americans, who are “wiser in their generation,” are making the most of them, especially of the locust-tree. But we must here let Mr. Cobbett speak. The following is so characteristic that our readers will not be displeased to see it reprinted from the *Register* of a week or two since :

“Curious, that while our snorting, groping, grasping, conceited, jack-ass like managers of Royal woods never have been able to perceive that it was their duty to pay attention to what I said about locust trees: curious, that while I have actually caused a million or more of these trees to be planted in England; and in going through the country see beautiful plantations of them: curious, that while my book called the “Woodlands,” would have taught these nasty snorting creatures how to furnish the English navy with pins (or trunnels as they are vulgarly

called), long and long ago; and a thousand times as good the best oak that they can find: curious, that they while these nasty snorting things have been totally disregarding this very important matter, the Americans themselves should have their attention stirred up by my exertions in England; as will appear by the following article, which I take from a New England newspaper, and which I request my readers to peruse with attention. There requires, however, an observation or two upon the subject. The reader will wonder at the necessity of encouraging people to plant this tree in a country which he will think full of them. In the first place, it is a rare tree all along the sea coast of America; and when you get as far south as Maryland, it will not grow near the sea at all. You must go back pretty nearly a hundred miles before the trees grow freely and finely; and even there, they do not grow so finely as in England. The reader will see mention of a worm that is injurious to this tree. There is such a worm in America. It gets into the joints of the shoots, and they canker and die. There is no such worm in England; and, in every respect, the tree is finer here than in America. Yet our snorting Government, who understands 'heddekashun' so well, who has found the art (see Duke of Richmond's scale) of making an Englishman live upon fifteen ounces of mutton a week, weighed before cooking, and including bone; who understands how to lay out, in time of peace, thirty-eight thousand pounds a year in secret service money; who beats all the turnkeys upon earth, in its knowledge of 'prison discipline;' who well understands the art of making farmers and labourers drink at the ditch, instead of turning their own hops and barley into beer; and yet I say, in spite of these facts from America; in spite of the proofs that this most essential timber of all might be supplied to our navy from our own public forests; in spite of all this, this snorting Government, sleepy-eyed, and ever grasping at the same time, cannot take even the trifling precaution necessary to this great end! But in this, as in everything else of its acts and its manners, we see proofs of a downward march: we see proofs that it is destined to come down. The miserable wretches who have the management of its affairs are, in the first place, destitute of all knowledge that can be of any use in the

sustaining of a State. They have been twenty years at peace; and they now tremble at the bare thought of war. They have expended, during this peace, three hundred millions of pounds sterling on a navy and an army; they have four hundred and fifty generals, and two hundred and fifty admirals, and yet they tremble at the thoughts of war; and tremble they well may; for, unless there be a total change in the system of taxing the people and carrying on the Government in England, driven off the face of the ocean to a certainty they will be, by the United States alone, if they dare to utter towards that famous Republic one of those insolent expressions with which it was so long their fashion to treat the different nations of the world. So much in the way of preface to an article on Locust Trees; but it was a good opportunity to exhibit their snorting manner of going on. Their conduct is the same with regard to all other matters of real interest to the people; and so it will be, until the end shall come.

“Extract from the ‘New England Palladium and Commercial Advertiser’ of March 27, 1885.

“‘PREMIUM ON LOCUST TREES.—The Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture have awarded to Mr. William Clarke, farmer, of this town, a premium of twenty dollars, as an expression of the estimation in which they hold his exertions in rearing a plantation of locust trees. The Committee states that the importance of this tree can hardly be over-rated, either for purposes of timber or fuel, and that it combines rapid growth with great durability. Posts of this wood will last half a century and more. The ravages of the borer for a long time have laid waste this tree, but the insect is said to be fast disappearing. It is easily cultivated, attains a sufficient growth in ten or fifteen years, and brings a great price for ship timber. Some trees in this vicinity have within a few years been sold at sums which would surprise those who have considered them good for nothing but shade.”

Quitting this subject, however, Mr. Cobbett had no sooner determined on returning once more to London, than he conceived the somewhat extravagant notion of disinterring the mortal remains of his old adversary, Tom Paine, and conveying them with him to England, for the

purpose of laying them in the land of his nativity. With Cobbett, first thoughts were generally conclusive, and such was the case in the present instance; the coffin containing the bones of Thomas Paine was exhumed, when the latter, after having been carefully placed in a box, were put on board the vessel in which he had taken his passage for the shores from which he had been self-exiled.

It will not be necessary to give any thing like a detailed narrative of his voyage homewards; suffice it to say that he endured all the various vicissitudes that belong to a sea life—storms, whirlwinds, contrary gales, &c. and that it was not till the 20th of November, 1819, that he found himself lying off the town of Liverpool, from which he had embarked under so much apprehension about two years previously.

As soon as it was known at Liverpool that Cobbett was among the passengers of the American vessel, a great number of his friends and political adherents hastened to the shore, in order to greet him on his return once more amongst them. On landing he was received by them with all the fervour that men can express when they behold once more a friend whom they had deemed lost to them for ever. The bones of Tom Paine, deposited in their wooden box, were lodged at the Custom House, and when Mr. Cobbett afterwards exhibited them to some of his friends, he observed feelingly: ‘There, gentlemen, are the mortal remains of immortal Thomas Paine. The skull was shown and the coffin plate exhibited, but all that could be distinguished of the inscription was “—Paine, 180— Aged 74 years. In the evening, accompanied by Mr. Egerton Smith, he visited several of his friends, by whom he was received with the greatest enthusiasm.

As it was soon understood that his stay in Liverpool would not exceed a very few days the Reformers announced their intention of given him a public welcome on his return to England. To effect their purpose and to ascertain his own opinion upon the subject, a letter, signed by some of the most influential of the party, was addressed to him, requesting an answer as to his acquiescence or refusal to meet them on the occasion. To this letter Mr. Cobbett returned an answer of some length, together with the following brief note:—

TO THE PEOPLE OF LIVERPOOL.

Liverpool, Nov. 24, 1819.

On the day of my landing here, I promised my friends who were anxious to see me, that I would give them an opportunity of doing it before my departure. In fulfilment of this promise, I intend to be at a public meeting, in Clayton Square, on Friday, the 26th instant, at twelve o'clock.

(Signed)

W. COBBETT.

The morning appointed for the meeting proved exceedingly unfavourable, yet, so great was the ardour of his friends and followers, that long before the appointed hour the ground was filled with a dense multitude. About half past twelve Mr. Cobbett entered the square, through Parker Street. He came in an open landau, accompanied by his son William, Mr. Smith, and one or two other friends. On arriving at the appointed place, he was received with reiterated and tremendous shouts, and it was not without considerable difficulty, that he at length made his way towards the south-west corner of the square, where it was his intention to address the assembled multitude. This he did in a speech of great force and eloquence, which he concluded by requesting that all who had assembled to do him so much honour on this happy occasion, would return home peaceably and orderly, so that their enemies might be deprived of the opportunity of revenging themselves on those whom they hoped thus to have drawn into a snare from which there would be no retreat.

In the evening, the dinner given to Mr. Cobbett in honour of his arrival in England, took place at the Castle Inn, Lord Street. The company who sat down to it exceeded sixty. Mr. Thomas Smith was in the Chair. It was a truly Radical dinner—nothing but the radical beverage, water being on the table. After the cloth had been removed and several toasts drank, Mr. Cobbett addressed himself to the company in a long and eloquent speech, of which the following is a brief outline: He first noticed the slanders which had been heaped upon him during his absence from England, and which, he said,

were not only false, but atrocious and unmanly ; but he had to thank the good sense of the country for having rendered them of no effect. He then proceeded to the subject of Parliamentary Reform, upon the then corrupt state of the representative system ; and upon the necessity, motive, and extent of Reform, he descanted at some length. He then adverted to the subject of the bones of Thomas Paine, and entered into a long justification of his motives for disinterring and bringing them to England. He then proceeded to defend himself from the charge of inconsistency which had been brought against him, in having once abused the very man whose bones he now intended to honour. This he did by urging the plea of immaturity of judgment and want of experience at the time he attacked Paine, and because Paine was then supporting the enemies of his country. Conscious that he had done Paine an injustice in his early days, he was willing on his return to America, to listen to a suggestion of Mr. Benbow's, to bring his bones to England. His remains had been dishonoured in America, though he was the founder of her independence ; for he was the first man to propose the declaration against England, though the proposal was opposed by the celebrated Dr. Franklin. With respect to the object of his bringing these bones to England, it was, (he said) to have them exhibited in London to as many persons as might choose to come and see them. He intended to do every thing he could to raise a sufficient sum, in order that a colossal statue might be erected to Paine's memory ; and, if he lived he hoped to execute his purpose. Having concluded the festivities of the evening, Mr. Cobbett retired followed by a great number of his friends.

On the 28th of November Mr. Cobbett left his kind friends at Liverpool, for the purpose of visiting a number of his acquaintances at Manchester. At Irlam, a place about ten miles from the last named town, he stopped for a short time to take some refreshment, and before he could again start on his journey, a messenger arrived from Manchester with a letter from the Boroughreeve and Constables, urging upon him the impolicy of his entering a town which had recently been the scene of a dreadful conflict between the Cavalry Yeomanry and the people who had assembled with Mr. Hunt for the purpose of petition-

ing for Parliamentary Reform. The following is the letter to which we have alluded :

“ Manchester, Nov. 28th, 1819.

“ Sir—having reason to believe that your introduction into the town of Manchester, on Monday, the 29 instant, is intended to be public, and to be accompanied by an unusual procession and multitude of people, as well strangers as inhabitants, we, the undersigned, being Boroughreeves and constables of the towns of Manchester and Salford, beg to inform you that we consider such an assemblage of a great mass of the population of this district, in the present situation of the country, is necessarily attended with considerable danger to the public peace. We do, therefore, caution you against making any public entry into the town of Manchester, and, if you persist in so doing, or if you adopt any other proceedings, whereby the public peace may be broken or endangered, we shall feel it our indispensable duty immediately to interfere.

We are, Sir, your obedient Servants,

| | | |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| Thomas Sharp, | Boroughreeve | } Manchester. |
| John Orford, | Constables, | |
| Richard Smith, | | |
| J. E. Scholes, | Boroughreeve | } Salford. |
| T. Marriot, | Constables, | |
| S. Mathews. | | |

Upon receiving this letter, Mr Cobbett immediately replied to Mr. Boroughreeve and Constables in the following terms:—

“ Irlam, Nov. 29th, 1819.

“ GENTLEMEN.—If it had come from any other person in this world, the notification which I have just received from you would have surprised me. Coming from you, it excites no surprise, nor any sort of feeling towards you, which was not before entertained by every just man, in every part of the world where your deeds and character have been heard of.

“ But, Gentlemen, is it really come to this, that a man upon returning to his country, or upon moving from one part of England to another, is to be stopped on his way by threats of *interference* on the part of officers appointed

to keep the peace) lest the concourse of people which his *mere presence* may draw together, should produce danger of a breach of the public peace? Is it really come to this? Is this the state of England? Is this the *law*? Is this one of the effects of that system which we are told is so excellent that it requires no reform? The laws of England secure to us the right of loco-motion; that is to say, the right of moving our bodies from one place to another. Now if your notification be any thing more than a mere empty putting forth of words, it presumes that you have a right to prevent me from enjoying this liberty of *loco-motion*. For you tell me you shall *interfere* if I persist in my intention of making a *public entry* into your town; and alas! we know too well what you mean by *interference*! And what do you mean by public entry? What do you mean, I say, by *public entry*? How am I to make any other than a public entry, if I enter it at all? Like other persons, my intention must have been to enter your town in a carriage, or on horseback or on foot. Are not these the ways in which all other persons enter? And have I not a right to enter as other persons do? Either, therefore, you must mean to forbid me to enter at all, or you must mean that I shall move like the women of the Seraglio of the Dey of Algiers, shut up in a box, with large air-holes in it—or ride upon a horse, my body and head being covered with a species of tub. This is the state, is it, to which the system has brought once free and happy England?

“To what a pitch must men have arrived, when they could sit down and look at one another in the face, while they wrote and signed a paper, such as that you sent me! This paper was addressed to a man having no power and no inclination to disturb the public peace; a man who, with the knowledge of the recent events daily impressed upon his mind, has taken the precaution to beseech the people, not to mix up a reception of him with even an allusion to those events. It appears manifest that the public peace could not have been endangered from my entrance into Manchester. But to see such multitudes of people assembled together to show their respect for me, appeared to have been more than you could endure. We read accounts of the Prince of Saxe Coburg, the Marquis of

Anglesea, the Duke of Wellington, and other *great* personages moving here and there amidst public plaudits. Infinite pains, at any rate are taken to make us believe that this is the case. What right, therefore, have you to make any attempt, either directly or indirectly to prevent the people from bestowing their applause upon me in person? Is not my right to move from place to place as perfect as that of any of the three men that I have just mentioned? Aye, but then the assemblages that they cause are so *small*!

"Suppose I were at this moment living at an inn in Manchester. It is pretty clear, I believe, that an assemblage of persons would take place at any time that I chose to walk out to the spot where the dreadful scenes of the 16th of August were exhibited. What, then, would you expel me your towns, or compel me to keep myself shut up in a room? And if the people presumed to come to show me marks of their respect, would you visit them with your awful *interference*? Gentlemen, we shall live to see the day, and that day I believe is not distant, when I shall be able to visit the excellent people of Manchester, and its neighbourhood, without you daring to step in between us with threats of interference.

"Let me call on you to think a little on the figure you now make in the world. Here am I, at ten miles from Manchester; there are the people whom you call an *unusual multitude*, ready to receive me, and to bestow upon me all possible marks of respect; and there are you, sending me threats of interference and preparing all sorts of means for making that interference effectual, in order to intercept a verbal expression of popular approbation, intended to be bestowed upon a man destitute of every species of means of obtaining that approbation, other than the means naturally arising from his integrity and his talents, his well known love for his country, and his well known zeal in her cause, during the whole course of his life, under all circumstances, whether abroad or at home, whether in prosperity or adversity.

"Thus the parties stand before the world. I disdain to tell you what my intentions are; whether I intend to enter Manchester or not. I have made this comment upon your communication, in order that the nature of your conduct

may be the better understood; and, even in doing this, I have condescended to bestow on you too great an honour.

"With feelings such as a real friend of the people, a real lover of his country, and faithful subject of the King, must ever entertain towards men like you. I am,

"WILLIAM COBBETT."

Having despatched this severe reply to the worthy Borough-reeves and Constables of Manchester and Salford, Mr. Cobbett began to think more calmly upon the subject, and to place things in a truer light before his own mind. He now foresaw the greatest danger lurking behind him if he should unwittingly throw himself within the power of those who would gladly have proved themselves the instruments of his destruction. Millions of eyes were anxiously fixed upon his every movement, in order to seize upon the first opportunity of fixing him with some vamped up charge of sedition or treason, that would be sufficient to throw him entirely on the tender mercies of those who had hitherto regarded him with a hatred the most profound. They only hoped for some such opportunity, and had Cobbett been a man of less judgment or penetration, the natural warmth of his temper would undoubtedly have led him into the commission of some act or other that would have been twisted and tortured into a treasonable attempt against the life of our sovereign King, his crown and dignity.

On first receiving the above named *polite* note or warning from the worthy officials of Manchester, the natural obstinacy of his disposition prevailed, and he determined, let the consequences to himself be what they might, to visit his friends at Manchester, and thus prove to his vile aspersers that he could, by his own influence, gather together a large assemblage of persons—restrain them from acts of violence, and eventually disperse each man to his home without the commission of even a single outrage. A little reflection, however, changed this hastily formed resolution;—his carriage was at the door, and stepping into it, he desired the driver to take a more circuitous route, and thus avoid Manchester and the evil consequence that might have arisen had he ventured to carry his original design into execution.

On arriving at Coventry he drove to the Craven Arms Hotel, intending to stay there that night. He then im-

mediately sent for a Mr. Lewis, who printed the Coventry Recorder, but being told he was in London, he sent for Mr. James Grant, at that time one of the principal leaders among the Radical Reformers, who shortly waited upon him, and the evening was passed together talking over the then threatening aspect of the political horizon. In the morning, after having partaken of his breakfast, perceiving that a large concourse of persons had assembled round the house for the purpose of welcoming him upon his arrival among them, he threw up the window sash, and began addressing the concourse, whom he promised to meet at the end of the town, when he would address them in a speech that should enlighten their understandings as to the dreadful state the country was in. He then closed the window, but scarcely had he done so, when the landlord (a purse-proud Tory, of course) sent him the following insolent note:—

“Sir—you have taken an unwarrantable liberty in addressing the populace from the windows of my house, and I hereby request your immediate departure from it.

“To Mr. Cobbett.”

“WM. WHITLOCK.”

Immediately upon receiving this impertinent epistle, Mr. Cobbett sent for the landlord, and, asked him if he had written it; he told him he had, and the sooner he quitted his house the better. To this *gentlemanly* request, of course Mr. C. could offer no resistance—he at once ordered his chaise, and during the time it was getting ready, a large placard was fastening to the window by the same officious personage, stating that *the bones of Cobbett and Tom Paine are ordered to quit this house*. Cobbett then mounted the bar of the chaise, and, with his hat in his hand, was driven to the extremity of the city of Coventry, where he addressed an assemblage of persons, who not having their skins and purses so well filled as had this insolent tavern keeper, were well pleased to hear the exposition he then favoured them with.

On arriving in London Mr. Cobbett was greeted by his numerous friends in a most enthusiastic manner. His return to England seemed to revive the hopes of the almost despairing Reformers, and they now looked forward with a degree of hope they had never experienced

before, that the justice they had so long and ineffectually demanded of the ministers, was almost within their grasp. A dinner in honour of his arrival was given to him at the Crown and Anchor, on Monday the 13th December 1819, at which all the leading men of his party were in attendance. The festival passed off happily enough, but the close of it was marked with a circumstance that proved the bitter malignity of those who had ever sought to injure him. At the close of the meeting, when he was just about to leave the Crown and Anchor, he was arrested by one of the Middlesex officers, for a debt contracted previous to his departure from this country. He was, however, subsequently bailed by Mr. Henry Hunt, and Mr. Thomas Dolby, the publisher of his Register.

This incident serves to prove how constantly his enemies were at work to annoy, nay even to ruin him. It was hoped that a gaol would now be his future doom, and that being thus, in some degree, separated from the other Reformers, he would become more pliant to the will of the government, and if not an advocate of their unjust measures, that he would at least cease to annoy them with his perpetual abuse of their infamous policy.

The situation of the country at the commencement of the year 1820 was more tranquil than the violent popular agitation of the preceding months would have given reason to expect. That agitation, though it had produced little actual mischief, had been in a high degree appalling. Foreign nations regarded us as on the eve of a revolution; and even the wise and experienced among our own nation were not without apprehension with respect to the possible result. The tumult was now hushed; and, in a country like England, external tranquillity is a decisive proof, whatever discontent may exist, of the absence of any intention of breaking out into open violations of the law.

This change must be ascribed, in part, to the rigorous measures pursued by government, and, in part, to the natural course of events. The manufacturing population had been deluded into a line of conduct inconsistent with civil order; all their passions had been excited; all their wildest prejudices and caprices had been flattered; and they had been taught that they might, by their violent proceedings, regulate the course of public events. They

had followed, to a certain point those who had presented themselves as leaders. Of course we cannot allude to Mr. Cobbett, because at the time he was not in England, and, if he had we are very sure that he would use all the interest he possessed to suppress those outrages to which we allude. They found that their distress was not in any way alleviated by their disorderly conduct. Work was not thereby more easily procured; wages were not higher; nor was a greater quantity of the necessaries of life placed within their reach. Far from bettering their condition by their threats of insurrection, they felt their miseries aggravated by the very alarm which their insubordination had spread. From the state of high exultation, therefore, into which they had been brought, and in which they had been for some time maintained, they naturally fell back into listlessness and languor: not perhaps positively approving the political constitution, but contemplating it at least with sentiments approaching to indifference, and occupied with their own distress, and its immediate proximate causes, more than with the dreams of political speculation.

The dogged firmness with which the government had acted, contributed much to bring about this state of passive obedience. With what hope could the violently disposed prosecute machinations which met with countenance from only the very lowest orders of the people, which were regarded with abhorrence by all the upper classes, and which the whole power of the state was arrayed to resist? The military force of the country has been augmented with the declared and exclusive object of repressing every tendency to intestine disorder; and the displeasure of government had been strongly marked against such as even with pure intentions had lent the weight of their names and characters to meetings calculated to encourage the ill-disposed. Ministers, it must be candidly confessed, though they acted with extreme severity, acted at least an open, perhaps we may add, even a manly part. They showed plainly that they would tolerate neither avowed disaffection nor any thing that tended to inspire the disaffected with flattering hopes.

As it was chiefly among the crowded population of the manufacturing districts, that the spirit of insubordination had manifested itself, it was a peculiarly fortunate cir-

cumstance that, from the latter end of 1819, the commercial embarrassments of the country ceased to increase, or rather began to decline. In 1819 both our exports and imports had fallen considerably below their previous amount. Though this diminution was no symptom of any permanent retardation of the progress of national opulence, since it might be accounted for sufficiently by temporary causes, and, in a great measure by the unusually large amount of the exports and imports of the immediately preceding year; yet the stagnation that was thereby occasioned in every branch of industry, brought severe privations upon the labouring classes, and these privations rendered them the more disposed to lend a willing ear to the preachers of sedition. As the extraordinary amount of the commercial transactions of 1818 had, in a considerable degree, provided for the demands and slackened the operations of the commercial world in 1819; so the comparative stagnation of the latter period gave scope for a more active employment of capital in the year 1820. Other more permanent causes co-operated with this casual circumstance in promoting the partial revival of our trade. In consequence of recent alterations in the channels of commerce, arising from the altered situation of the world, many merchants and manufacturers had, for some time, found their old sources of gain altogether unproductive, and, as time and experience are always necessary for the discovery of new modes of employing capital profitably, few of them had been able to hit upon untried paths of lucrative industry. The alteration, too, which, since the termination of the war, had been gradually taking place in the value of money, had necessarily been most ruinous in its operation upon all capitalists who were holders of commodities which fell in price. This circumstance may be regarded as having, in a great measure, ceased to operate upon our manufacturers by the end of 1819. That year saw the crisis of our manufacturing and commercial embarrassments: the loss and destruction of commercial capital, occasioned by the altered circumstances of the world, had nearly finished its course, and the intercourse of nations was beginning to take the direction most compatible with the natural advantages and legislative enactments of each particular country.

In consequence of the partial revival of commerce, our manufacturing population found it more easy to obtain employment than in the preceding years, and received a more liberal remuneration for their labour. At the same time the price of grain sustained a considerable diminution. The average prices of wheat, which in 1819 had been generally above 72s. per quarter, and often approached to 80s. fluctuated during the first half of the year 1820, between 60s. and 70s. per quarter, and, towards the end of that year to between 50s. and 60s. Animal food, and the other productions of agricultural industry participated in this fall. In the course of the last-named year, therefore, the situation of the manufacturing labourer was doubly improved; he earned more, and the same amount of earnings gave him a greater command of the necessaries of life.

Though, therefore, it cannot be denied that distress did exist in the country at the beginning and throughout the course of the year 1820, and though there was even reason to apprehend, that among one important class of the community it would go on increasing, yet it was of a nature which by no means indicated any decay of general prosperity. It arose from a change which the natural course of events was gradually bringing about in the distribution of wealth among us, and from circumstances which placed us in a more advantageous relation to the other nations of Europe than had for some time subsisted between us and them.

It will be perceived that we have pursued this subject to a rather greater length than perhaps the limits of this work will allow, yet, as this was about the period when the Radical Reformers had attained so much strength and influence in the country, we trust the reader will pardon the digression upon the consideration that it will at any rate serve to give him a tolerable idea of the state of parties at that important period.

From Mr. Cobbett's return to England, November 1819 to the end of 1820, no event of any great consequence occurred in the life of this extraordinary man. It is true that he had to sustain actions for slander, brought by two parties, and to be tried at about the same time. But Cobbett possessed too much nerve to be daunted by these violent attacks made upon him, and preparing himself for

the coming contest, he determined to defend them both in person. The first of them was tried in the Court of King's Bench, December 5th, 1820, on which occasion Mr. (now Lord) Brougham appeared in behalf of the plaintiff. The libel complained of was this:—upon the 10th of April, 1806, the defendant William Cobbett, wrote a letter to Mr. James Wright, containing certain reflections upon the character of Mr. Henry Hunt. The letter so written was read upon the public hustings by Mr. Cleary, (the plaintiff in this action) at the Westminster election in 1818. The defendant then, notwithstanding his having written the letter, published in his Register of the 5th September 1818, a certain libel upon the plaintiff, intimating that the letter which the plaintiff had read as his (Cobbett's) letter, had not been written by him; but that it was in truth a forgery, and that the plaintiff had been concerned in forging it. There were other counts for general aspersion of the plaintiff's character, and the damages were laid at 3,000*l*. After an admirable speech from Mr. Brougham, Cobbett rose and commenced his defence, which he did in an address of masterly eloquence, and which we cannot help feeling some mortification at being obliged to omit. We will, however, give the concluding paragraphs as showing the admirable style that pervaded all the efforts of his mind.

Mr. Cobbett at length proceeded to animadvert with great severity, on the characters of the witnesses brought against him, describing Messrs. Wright and Jackson, in particular, as men whom he had rescued from the depths of misery, and who now sought to wound, after having betrayed, their generous and unsuspecting benefactor. He ridiculed the absurdity of setting up his former praise of one of them as a counter-balance to that censure which his subsequent conduct had deserved. Who amongst them had not, in his experience of life, met with servants who had disappointed his expectations? Othello praised Iago at the commencement of the drama, but he exclaimed in the last act, "cursed, damned Iago!" and yet who pretended to say that Shakspeare was wrong or that Othello was inconsistent?—He (Mr. C.) had been reproached with versatility; all he could say was that he had endeavoured to go from good to better, or, at least from bad to good; perhaps there were some at that bar whose versatility was

equally notorious, and consisted not in any regular progress, but in going backwards and forwards, and in perpetual shifting and changing. The plaintiff had been called a mild inoffensive fellow, but he (Mr. C.) would wish to guard the jury against mistaking feebleness for mildness. He trusted the jury would not consent to be made the instruments for plundering him and his family of the little which yet belonged to them, although he would work to the last before he would knuckle one moment to the authors of as black and treacherous a conspiracy as ever disgraced the human character. He looked to them (the jury) as to Englishmen, in whose hearts there yet survived a hatred of baseness and espionage, however some persons might rejoice in the latter. The evil genius of the learned counsel. (Brougham) could alone have led him into this cause, and he should sit down satisfied that an honest jury would not only do him justice, but by their verdict stamp with infamy every man who should violate the sanctity, by betraying the confidence, of friendship. The Lord Chief Justice summed up, and the jury, after having retired three quarters of an hour, returned a verdict for the plaintiff—Damages 40s.

Now this trial, terminating as it did with merely nominal damages for the plaintiff, one would have thought sufficient to quiet all the other yelping curs that were so constantly annoying Mr. Cobbett—But no, there was yet further interest secretly working behind to urge them forward in their work of destruction, and the consequence was, that a few days afterwards, viz.: on the 11th of December, the other trial came on in the same court, and against the self-same defendant, for a second charge of libel, in which, in reality, the same parties were concerned who constituted the plaintiffs in the former action. The cause being called on, Mr. Cobbett rose and intimated to the court that he intended to withdraw his plea of justification.

Mr. Chitty then opened the pleadings. The libels charged were three in number, and consisted of certain paragraphs published in the *Political Register* of the 4th of January 1817, 9th March 1819, and 6th January 1820. These paragraphs severally charged the plaintiff, Mr. Wright, with forgery and fraud, and describing him as an individual to be held up to the horror and detestation of mankind.

Mr. Scarlett stated, that the plaintiff, Mr. Wright, was known to the world as the editor of the Parliamentary History, the Parliamentary Debates, and of other works of great learning and utility. Those works which had been originally introduced to the public under the shelter Mr. Cobbett's name having been conducted, in fact, entirely by the plaintiff. To introduce the defendant to the jury would scarcely be necessary. During many years no person had been more the object of public notice than William Cobbett. By his writings that individual had made himself known in every part of the globe where the English language was known or spoken; and far was he (Mr. Scarlett) from wishing to insinuate against a man of undoubted talent more than his duty to the plaintiff absolutely demanded. This he would say, that he possessed such talents for writing as during a long term of years had been unparalleled in the history of the literature of the country. Need the learned gentleman remind the jury in how perilous a situation that individual was placed, who became the subject of attack by such a writer.

In the course of a long connexion in their literary speculations, a bill trade, to the extent of sixty or seventy thousand pounds, had taken place between the plaintiff and defendant.

Between the years 1805 and 1811 the accounts, as would commonly be found the case when accommodation paper was employed, became extremely intricate between Mr. Wright and Mr. Cobbett, and, in short, they were in such a state, that to use the very forcible language employed by the defendant himself when an arrangement of the business was proposed, "they were in such a state that the devil himself could not unravel them." Things were in this situation when Mr. Cobbett was called upon to defend himself against the charge of libel, and upon that charge was convicted (1810). Upon that conviction the question arose as to what steps should be taken to avert the impending calamity of judgment, and those measures conducted Mr. Scarlett to the first of the libels which he had to state to the jury. Mr. Cobbett proposed to a gentleman who would presently be called as a witness, to make a bargain for him with government that he should not be called up for judgement, and, upon that condition

he would give up his Register. The negotiation did not succeed. The disputed accounts were arranged by the award of Mr. William Cooke. Mr. Cobbett claimed about £12,000, and received about £6,000, and the effect of this curtailment of his claim was an inveterate hostility conceived against Mr. Wright. The passage which led to the first libel charged, was contained in an article entitled "A New Years Gift to Old George Rose," and appeared as follows: "Walter says I made a proposition to Government to this effect—that if proceedings were dropped against me, I would never publish another Register or any other thing. If I did so, no one could condemn me, and therefore I might allow the charge of Walter to be true; but the charge is absolutely false, for no such proposition was ever made from me, or by my authority." And Mr. Cobbett then went on to tell a story of his having certainly gone down to Botley with such an idea, worked upon by the tears and entreaties of his family; but that he had withdrawn this proposition on subsequent reflection. Unfortunately, however, (continued Mr. Scarlett) Mr. Cobbett had transmitted to Mr. Wright the farewell number of his Register, which would have been the concluding number, if his proposition to government had been carried into effect. Now the first of the libels in question arose out of a suspicion that it was by Mr. Wright that the fact had been communicated to the *Times*; and in expressing his opinion that such had been the course of communication, the Defendant spoke of Mr. Wright as "a wretch unequalled in the annals of infamy, and whom he would hold up to the horror of mankind."

Mr. Scarlett then proceeded to advert to the second libel upon the record, which originated out of the conduct of Mr. Cleary in reading at the Westminster election of 1818, Mr. Cobbett's letter of 1808, in which he spoke of Mr. Hunt with feelings very different from those which he subsequently expressed towards that gentleman. Mr. Cobbett in his plea upon the present record, had pledged himself to prove those assertions to be true. The paragraph in which he described the big drop of sweat—Mr. Scarlett would read the paragraph:—

"You, my dear sir, know the history of this Wright; you know all his tricks, all his attempts. The public do not, and I will not now trouble the public with a detail

which, if put in a suitable form, would make a romance in the words of truth, far surpassing anything that ever was imagined of moral turpitude. I will execute this task one day or other. If the caitiff should put forth anything by way of palliation in the mean time, there is Mr. Walker, there is Mr. Margrave, there is my attorney, there is Mr. Swann, there is Sir Francis Burdett himself; there is my son John, who, though he was then a child, will never forget the big round drops of sweat that in a cold winter's day rolled down the caitiff's forehead when he was detected in fabricating accounts; and when I took Johnny by the hand (who had begun whimpering for poor Wright) and said, 'Look at that man my dear! These drops of sweat are the effect of detected villany! Think of that my dear child, and you will always be an honest man!' Mr. Peter Walker and Mr. Swann were present at this scene, which took place in my room in Newgate in 1811.

The contents of this paragraph Mr. Cobbett undertook to prove the truth of.

The publication by the defendant was proved by a number of witnesses.

The libels in question were then put in and read, and and the case for the prosecution being thus concluded.

Mr. Cobbett entered upon his defence. He began by observing that the proverb forbidding the cobbler to go beyond his last, might be extremely applicable, as well as useful to lawyers. If Mr. Scarlett had not gone beyond his brief, a great deal of time would have been saved to the jury. Mr. Cobbett then remarked upon the evidence which had been adduced by the plaintiff, and intimated to the jury the ground upon which he proposed to rest his defence, that ground was simply this:—that it was his son William, and not himself who had been the publisher of the libels in question, and that a considerable portion of the matter complained of in the Register of the 6th of March, 1819 had been written by his sons William and John.

William Clement and Charles Preston proved, that William Cobbett the younger, was the publisher of the Register.

William Cobbett, jun. was next called. The witness swore, that the property of the paper was made over by

his father to him, and that his father received from him a salary as editor. That salary varied from time to time from 35 or 40 guineas a week to £350 per month. Witness was *bona fide* proprietor of the paper. He frequently made alterations in the matter transmitted by his father, and made most material alterations in that part of the Register of the 6th of March, 1819, which alluded to the plaintiff.

Mr. John Cobbett, another of the defendant's sons, deposed principally to some alterations by him, and by his brother, in the article of the 6th of March 1819 which regarded Mr. Wright, the plaintiff. The alterations were made, because the article was not sufficiently bitter.

Mr. Scarlett, in reply, contended that the whole course of Mr. Cobbett's defence had been an aggravation of the injury which he had done to the plaintiff.

The Lord Chief Justice, in summing up, held that Mr. Cobbett, either as the *bona fide* proprietor, or as the editor of the Political Register, would be liable for its contents. The jury retired, and after a short consultation found a verdict for the plaintiff—Damages 1,000*l.* costs 40*s.*

The trial occupied the Court from half-past nine in the morning till a quarter past ten at night.

Thus was Mr. Cobbett once more condemned to pay a heavy fine for speaking that which as an honest man, he was obliged, in justice to himself to do. How the case exactly stood between the parties we of course cannot take upon ourselves to explain, but this we know, and so does every one else, that has ever had any thing to do with law, that whenever such cases came before a jury the utmost exaggeration is had recourse to by both parties. Mr. Wright might probably feel himself aggrieved by certain expressions in the libel, but on the other hand are we not to acquit Mr. Cobbett on the ground that he had been compelled to endure much deprivation and lasting injury from the supposed conduct of parties implicated in the transaction. For our own part we believe Mr. Wright to have been an honourable straight-forward man—that is our impression—but how the affair stood between him and Mr. Cobbett we, of course, cannot in any way explain to the reader.

In the year 1820, Mr Cobbett made his first attempt

to get into Parliament, and as the constituency of Coventry seemed to be sufficiently Radical to afford him some hope in that quarter, it was determined to start there. Accordingly, an active canvass was carried on in his behalf, and, in order to further the object in view, he proposed a subscription for that purpose on a small work which he intended for gratuitous distribution. By this means he contrived to raise about seventy pounds, and in addition to which he expended out of his own pocket, a further sum of upwards of one hundred pounds. The result, however, proved unfortunate, and he lost his election, so that he was, in fact, considerably out of pocket by a transaction, in which his enemies have endeavoured to make out a case against him of sordidness, and an attempt to draw money out of the pockets of those who were willing to risk any thing in the hope of bringing him into the House of Commons. But let us even suppose that the sum subscribed had been to a much larger amount, and that there had been no consideration given—which there was,—would not the reformers—had they succeeded, have reaped an abundant advantage by having thus placed him in a sphere where his powerful influence and gigantic intellect would have done so much in the cause which was dearest to his heart? Would he not have pleaded the wrongs of an oppressed people with ten-fold advantage could he but have taken his stand among those who were most interested in withholding from a nation that justice, which, once granted, would, they well knew, prove the utter destruction of the unjust power they had so long usurped? And would not, we ask, the paltry sum advanced have been amply repaid, had he thus attained the object for which all men who really love their country, had most sincerely at heart? The answer to this question is too evident to be doubted, and thus the charge of sordidness brought against Mr. Cobbett, is, we hope, set at rest for ever.

In the year 1823, the agricultural distress of this country had diminished considerably, but the effects in the by-gone change in the circumstances of many owners and cultivators of the soil were still felt in a degree strong enough to give a plausible pretext for complaint. These complaints were uttered most loudly in various county

meetings, held immediately before, or shortly after, the meeting of parliament, at which the necessity of diminishing the taxes and of reforming the constitution of the legislature was sometimes insinuated, and sometimes boldly avowed. Among the counties which voted petitions were Norfolk, Somerset, York, Berks, Hereford, Middlesex and Surrey. In the meeting held at Norwich, on the 3rd of January 1823, the Whigs, who had convened it and meant it to be a vehicle for their own opinions, were completely defeated by the unexpected appearance of Mr. Cobbett, on the stage ; who, after having exposed the fallacy and incoherence of the resolutions proposed by them, moved an address of his own, which was carried triumphantly by the acclamations of the assembled thousands. This petition, after the usual complaints against sinecures, taxes, the church and the national debt, prayed an efficient reform of Parliament, in order that such Parliament might adopt the measures necessary to effect the following purposes :—1. An appropriation of a part of the property of the Church to the liquidation of the debt. 2. A reduction of the standing army, including staff, barracks, and colleges, to a scale of expence as low as that of the army before the last war. 3. A total abolition of all sinecures, pensions, grants and emoluments, not merited by public services :—4. A sale of the Crown lands, and an application of the money towards the liquidation of the debt :—5. An equitable adjustment with regard to the public debt, and also with regard to all debts and contracts between man and man. But, as to effect these purposes might require a lapse months, the petitioners further prayed, that Parliament, in order to afford immediate protection against ruin, would be pleased :—1. To suspend, by law, for one year, all distresses for rent, and to cause distresses already issued to be set aside. 2. To suspend all processes for tithes for the same period. 3. To suspend, for the same period, all processes arising out of mortgage, bond, annuity or other contract affecting house or land. 4. To repeal the whole of the taxes on malt, hops, leather, soap and candles.

The Whig aristocracy of Norfolk, indignant that such principles should be supposed to emanate from their country, caused petitions to be prepared and numerously

signed in distinct hundreds, reprobating the petition adopted at Norwich, but complaining bitterly of agricultural distress, and calling loudly for Parliamentary reform. The original petition and also the counter-petitions were presented to the House of Commons, by Mr. Coke, who, on that occasion, declared his dissent from Mr. Cobbett's conclusions, and ascribed that gentleman's triumph to the confusion of the meeting, and to the ignorance, in which the individuals composing it were, of what was really said by the speakers. Mr. James was the only member of the opposition, who expressed any approbation of the doctrines adopted at Norwich. Yet the only essential difference between Mr. Cobbett and his adversaries appears to have been, that, both setting out from the same assumptions, Mr. Cobbett pushed his premises to their utmost consequences, while Mr. Coke and his party, preferring prudence to logic, adopted the principles acceptable to their querulousness, and yet disavowed the inferences to which these principles, if fairly followed up, necessarily led. Mr. Cobbett's success at Norwich, induced him to attempt to play the same part at Hertford: but there the country gentlemen were prepared to meet their antagonist; and, instead of carrying his point, the violent and ignorant mob would not even grant him a hearing.

Leaving these busy scenes of political strife, we have now to record an event which reflects the highest honour, upon the ingenuity and skill displayed by Mr. Cobbett in the useful arts. On the 28th May 1823, the anniversary meeting of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, &c. was held in the King's Theatre, Haymarket, for the purpose of distributing the rewards adjudged to the candidates for their proficiency, improvements, and inventions in arts, manufactures and commerce. The chair was taken by his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, who, among many of the prizes which he distributed, bestowed one, a silver medal, upon Mr. Wm. Cobbett, for plat from English grass, resembling in its texture and manufacture that imported from Leghorn.

From this period to the year 1826, no event of any particular interest occurred to which we shall refer in

the life of Mr. Cobbett. At the general election in the month of June, in that year, however, he had the courage to offer himself to the electors of Preston, when he found amongst them a good many kindred hearts. That Cobbett should have polled nearly a thousand votes in Preston is not a matter of surprise even in the then unreformed Parliament, since that town enjoyed almost universal suffrage, and the fact affords an admirable instance of the effects of that mode of distributing the elective franchise. On its termination, though unsuccessful, he addressed the assemblage as follows :

Gentlemen :—I have done much good to you by coming; I have sweated your tyrants—I have bled them. I have made the silly honourable (Mr. Stanley, now Lord Stanley, and then his opponent) throw 15,000*l.* among you, and that's no joke; for though these lords have too much land, they have not too much money. I have tickled the captain too; I have made him dance to some tune; he must have pledged his half pay to keep open house for you, and now, like the other half-pays in London, he must live on plates of beef and goes of gin for the next seven years. As to Mr. Wood, I could not draw any money out of him, for the poor devil had none to spend; but his father, Otty Wood, the miserly old sugar-baker of Liverpool, I have extracted from his pocket what a hundred-horse-power steam engine could not draw from him—I have made him spend 7,000*l.* These are what I have done for you, gentlemen. But I have done more—I have kept out the Tory Captain Barry; not that I like Wood either; I only dislike him least of the two; but you shall not be cursed with either one or other of these gentlemen. The election is not worth a straw. I'll have it set aside next April, when I'll bleed our opponents again, and you'll elect me for your representative—the only man who has the wish and the ability, the heart and the head to serve you and his country—myself, gentlemen, myself."

Mr. Cobbett punctually kept his promise to petition against the return; but circumstances compelled him to neglect entering into his required recognizances, and the petition was consequently discharged. To his honour, be it said, however, we have heard it confessed by those who were assisting him at this election, that

a hundred pounds worth of ale would have carried him in ; but to his credit we are anxious to make it known, that Mr. Cobbett indignantly scouted the proposition, and spurned the debased wretches who required it.

In 1827 there was great activity displayed in Dublin and various other parts of Ireland, in establishing Orange Associations under the name of Brunswick Clubs. The chief club was held at Morrison's, one of the principal hotels and taverns of Dublin. In the counties of Derry, Cavan, Cork, &c., the organization of these clubs proceeded with equal activity. At Sligo, Armagh, Derry, Antrim, Enniskillen, &c., initiatory proceedings were commenced. Indeed it was intended, if possible, to establish a Protestant rent. These clubs were also ramifying in various parts of England. One was formed in the county of Bucks, under the denomination of the Brunswick Constitutional Club of the County of Buckingham, in which a number of the nobility and gentry quickly enrolled their names. One of the largest meetings ever held in Kent took place at the same time at Maidstone, to take into consideration the best means of expressing the determination of the Protestants of that county to uphold the principles which placed the House of Brunswick on the throne of these realms ;—that is to say, to exclude the Catholics from all the benefits that should reward good citizens, and add, if possible another link to the heavy chain that then galled them.

There were present at this meeting, (besides the chairman the Hon. Colonel Wingfield Stratford,) the Earl of Winchelsea, Viscount Sydney, Lord Teynham, Lord Bexley, the Hon. Mr. Harris, eldest son of Lord Harris, Sir John Bridges M. P., Sir Egerton Brydges, Mr. Wells M. P. for Maidstone, Sir Edward Dering, Gen. Mulcaster, Sir Edward Knatchbull, M. P. and a vast number of thick and thin Tories and Anti-Catholics. The first resolution, which went to the establishment of the Brunswick Club, was proposed by the Earl of Winchelsea, and seconded by Sir John Brydges, and passed unanimously. The meeting was subsequently addressed in support of the resolutions by Lord Sydney, Lord Bexley, Sir Edward Dering, and others, and the same strong and bigoted tone of high Protestant feeling pervaded the entire assemblage.

As might have been expected, the establishment of these Brunswick Clubs excited a strong spirit of opposition on the part of the supporters of Catholic Emancipation, and perhaps no one felt more indignant at the course the Protestants had adopted than did Mr. Cobbett, and from that moment he exerted all his talents and influence to circumvent them in their places for thus crushing the hopes of their Catholic brethren. On the 24th of October 1828, another meeting of the Brunswick Club was held on Penenden Heath, Kent, under the sanction of the individuals we have just mentioned, and the High Sheriff of the county. The object of the meeting was to pass a series of resolution, "praying that the Protestant constitution of the United Kingdom may be preserved entire and inviolable." The resolutions were violently opposed by the Marquis of Camden, Lord Darnley, Dr. Doyle, Mr. Shiel, Mr. Cobbett, Mr. Hunt, and other friends to a liberal system of government. An amendment was moved by Mr. Hodges of Rochester, proposing that the subject of the present discussion should be left to the discretion of Ministers, and that the meeting should adjourn. The amendment was seconded by the Earl of Radnor, but on being put, was negatived by a majority of about two-thirds of the meeting. The original motion for agreeing to the resolution was then carried without further opposition. On this occasion Mr. Cobbett endeavoured to obtain a hearing, but numbers and intolerance were against him, and after an ineffectual attempt to reason with the swinish multitude, he was obliged to yield to the power of those who carried every thing by force and not by fair argument.

It will no doubt be in the recollection of our readers, that in the course of the year 1830, a great number of incendiary fires broke out in almost every part of England. There were numerous causes assigned for this unequivocal demonstration of popular discontent, such as agricultural distress—a desire to expedite the progress of a Reform in the Constitution. Whatever the cause might have been, is not a question that we can be expected to answer at this moment, and it is merely alluded to in reference to the part taken under the circumstances by Mr. Cobbett, and

the result which it led to, namely a trial for sedition in having spoken somewhat too openly on the subject in his *Political Register* of December 11th 1830.

After a long and vexatious delay, Mr. Cobbett was tried on the 7th of July, 1831, in the Court of King's Bench, Guildhall, before Lord Tenterden and a special Jury, upon the prosecution of the Attorney-General Denman, for the publication of a seditious and malicious libel, tending to excite the agricultural labourers to acts of sedition, insurrection, arson, &c. This was, to say the least of it, a most indiscreet proceeding on the part of government. It gave to Mr. Cobbett an opportunity of animadverting upon their weak and wicked policy towards the agricultural labourers, and of indulging in a strain of irony and sarcasm, which he could not otherwise have had the opportunity of doing, their departure from those principles they had professed when in opposition, and upon the credit of which they had been borne into office.

This was an indictment against Mr. William Cobbett, charging him with the publication, on the 11th of December preceding, of a libel with intent to raise discontent in the minds of the labourers in husbandry, and to incite them to acts of violence, and to destroy corn, machinery, and other property—at least this was the language of the indictment, but to the charges therein preferred the defendant pleaded not guilty.

When he attended the Court, attended by his sons, his attorney, and two friends, some persons in the gallery immediately greeted him by clapping their hands, and, on proceeding to take his seat, they gave three loud huzzas. The defendant seemed highly gratified, and turning round and looking towards the gallery, said, "If truth prevails, we shall beat them."

The Attorney General (Denman) then stated the case for the Crown, adverting to the system of riot, fire-raising, and breaking machinery, which had spread destruction through so many counties in the end of the last, and the beginning of that year. It was, (he said) at this particular time, when special commissioners were issued for the investigation of crimes of this description, that the defendant published the number of the *Weekly*

litical Register, on which the indictment was founded. The paper was ushered in with a heading taken from another paper by the same author, published on the 24th of October, 1815, in the following terms:—"At last, it will come to a question of actual starvation, or fighting for food; and when it comes to that point, I know that Englishmen will never lie down and die by hundreds by the way side."

Following up the idea in the motto, (continued the Attorney General) there was a paper called the *Rural War*, as if those unhappy persons were banded together to commit acts of violence, like troops carrying on a war against those who withheld from them provisions. Then the "Special Commission" came, as the next general title, and a letter appeared, addressed to those very people who were likely to be called upon to take their trials for the offences with which they were charged. The first paragraph related to the Commission; then there was an observation about some clergyman who had written a paper which had given great offence to Mr. Cobbett. Mr. Cobbett made some severe remarks not only upon the conduct of the clergyman who published that paper, but on the conduct of the clergy in general. He also made some strong observations upon the title to tithes, with which it was not necessary for him, (the Attorney [General]) to trouble the jury. The particular paragraph to which he was bound to allude, as seditious, was the following:—"In the meantime, however, the parsons are reducing their tithes with tolerable degree of alacrity! It seems to come from them like drops of blood from the heart; but it comes, and must all come, or England will never again know even the appearance of peace. "Out of evil comes good." We are not, indeed upon that mere maxim "to do evil that good may come from it." But without entering at present into the motives of the working people, it is unquestionable that their acts have produced good, and great good too. They have been always told, and they were told now, and by the very parson that I have quoted above, that their acts of violence, and particularly their burnings, can do them no good, but add to their wants by destroying the food that they would have to eat. Alas! they know better;

they know that one threshing machine takes wages from ten men; and they also know that they should have none of this food, and that potatoes and salt do not burn! therefore, this argument is not worth a straw. Besides, they see and feel that the good comes, and comes instantly too. They see that they get some bread in consequence of the destruction of part of the corn; and while they see this, you attempt in vain to persuade them that that which they have done is wrong. And as to one effect, that of making the parsons reduce their tithes, it is hailed as a good by ninety-nine hundredths, even of men of considerable property; while there is not a single man in the country who does not clearly trace the reduction to the acts of the labourers, and especially to the fires; for it is the terror of these, and not the bodily force, that has prevailed. To attempt to persuade either farmers or labourers that the tithes do not do them any harm, is to combat plain common sense. They must know and they do know, that whatever is received by the parson is just so much taken from them, except that part which he may lay out for productive labour in the parish; and that is a mere trifle compared with what he gives to the East and West Indies, to the wine countries, to the footmen, and to other unproductive labourers. In short, the tithe owners take away from the agricultural parishes, a tenth part of the gross produce, which, in the present state of abuse of the institution, they apply to purposes not only not beneficial, but generally mischievous to the people of those parishes.

“In another passage,” continued the Attorney-General, “the defendant expressed his opinion that the criminals ought not to be made to suffer for any thing they had done; and, speaking of the probability of some of them losing their lives, this language was used:—

“No; this will not be done. The course of these ill-used men had been so free from ferocity, so free from any thing like blood-mindedness! They have not been cruel even to their most savage and insolent persecutors. The most violent thing that they have done to any person, has not amounted to an attempt on the life or limb of the party; and in no case but in self defence, except in the cases of the two hired overseers in Sussex, whom they merely trundled out of the carts which those hirelings had had con-

structed for them to draw like cattle. Had they been bloody, had they been cruel, then it would have been another matter; had they burnt people in their beds, which they might so easily have done; had they beaten people wantonly, which has always been in their power; had they done any of these things, then there would have been some plea for severity. But they have been guilty of none of these things; they have done desperate things, but they were driven to desperation: all men, except the infamous stock-jobbing race, say, and I say, that their object is just; that they ought to have that for which they are striving; and all men except that same hellish crew, say that they had no other means of obtaining it."

The Attorney-General said, after reading these passages, that he should think it a waste of time if he pursued the argument further. He could not conceive that there would be a doubt in any reasonable unbiassed mind, that there was a tendency not to be mistaken—an inference of an intention not to be resisted—with regard to the conduct which these persons were taught to pursue, by a reference to the success of those offences which they had committed. What was the tendency of all these things? to excite a suffering people, but at all events a people whose minds were inflamed to a repetition of crime.

The publication of the libel complained of having been proved,

Mr. Cobbett addressed the jury in a long speech, arguing against the criminal intent and tendency imputed in the indictment to the publication, but principally employing himself in an exposure of the government which had prosecuted him, and more especially the Attorney-General. He referred to the language which had been held regarding him in parliament, and complained that his trial had been going on there since the beginning of the session, one member after another "falsely, maliciously, and scandalously," imputing to him, his lectures and publications, the crimes which had been committed in the agricultural counties. He next alluded to "the vast affection which our present whig government entertain for the liberty of the press. They never proceed by information! O, no; and then their Attorney-General, Sir Thomas Denman, he also had a particular affection for the liberty of the press.

O yes, Denman was an honest fellow, and would not, on any account, touch the liberty of the press. Yet it so happened that their Whig government, with their Whig Attorney-General, had carried on more state prosecutions during the seven months that they had been in office, than their Tory predecessors had in seven years. The Tories—the haughty and insulting Tories—shewed their teeth to be sure, but they did not venture to bite. Not so with the Whigs. If they should happen to remain in office a twelvemonth, all the gaols in the kingdom must be enlarged, for they would not contain room enough for the victims of this Whig government. The government itself, he (Mr. Cobbett) maintained, and its organs, were now the most atrocious of all libellers. Their newspapers libelled right and left—but libelled on their own side, and therefore were allowed to libel with impunity. He referred to the abuse which the *Times* (then a Whig paper,) for instance, was every day pouring on the House of Commons, not only with the tendency but with the loudly proclaimed purpose of bringing that branch of the legislature into utter horror and contempt. Did Sir Thomas Denman prosecute? No, no. That was his side—and instead of prosecuting, when Sir R. Inglis, brought the *Times* before the house, he maintained that the libel was true, and should be passed over. Not even the judges had escaped. Not two months before, the *Times* put forth, that Mr. William Brougham, a candidate for Southwark, said to the electors, in regard to the Reform Bill, “Among the devices to defeat the measures of ministers, a canvass is going on by the judges of the land, who have degraded themselves and their station.” This was pretty well coming from a brother of the Lord Chancellor, the first judge in the country. Then came the *Times*—a paper in close connection with the government, and after stating that the dignified neutrality which the judges had observed since the last days of Charles, were now at an end, added: “these judges expect a reformed parliament to ask, why they should receive £5,500 a-year each, these hard times:” thus imputing to those learned personages the basest motives.

Next day came the *Courier*, the heir-loom of all administrations, saying that there had been a total disregard of decency on the part of the judges; that such men were not

fit to preside on trials of a political nature; and then they asked, "What chance has a reformer, if tried before one of these judges? How is he to expect a fair trial? We almost wish that the judges did not hold their office for life!"

Then came on the *Morning Chronicle*, stating that the conduct of Mr. Justice Park, who was one of the judges who had acted so shamefully, was to be made the subject of some parliamentary proceedings, perhaps even some motion for an impeachment. As the Attorney-General had taken notice of the observations the judges—as he had left them to defend themselves, to puff off themselves, and to pay for newspaper paragraphs if they pleased—he ought not to have called upon him to answer for what he had published. There was a person who had written, "Down with kings, lords, and priests." That person entitled his paper *The Republican*, and his advice to the people was, to put down kings, lords, and priests. The Attorney-General had said in Parliament that he thought it better to leave such things to the good sense of the people. Then why did he not leave his publication to the good sense of the people? Was this partial selection to be endured? Would the jury allow themselves to be degraded into the mean tools of such foul play? The Attorney-General himself, might recollect the circumstance of a person, who was never a hundred miles distant from Sir Thomas Denman, comparing the late king to Nero, and calling the present king a "royal slanderer." But all these things were nothing; you might publish as many libels as you chose, but only don't touch the faction. "That," (continued Mr. Cobbett,) "is my whole offence. For years I have been labouring to lop off useless places and pensions, and that touches the faction. These Whigs, who have been out of office for five-and-twenty years—these lank Whigs—lank and merciless as a hungry wolf—are now filling their purses with the public money, and I must be crushed, and to-day, gentleman, they will crush me, unless you stand between me and them."

"In regard to the tendency of the publication (said Mr. Cobbett), the indictment charged that he published, contriving and intending to incite the labourers in husbandry to outrages—to various acts of violence, by break-

ng of machinery and setting fires. Now the jury must be satisfied, not from what was set out in the indictment, containing, as it did, garbled extracts, but they must be satisfied from the whole context—from the whole scope and tenour of the article—that the intention was that which the indictment charged it to be, before they could find a verdict of guilty. They had a right to look not only to what was stated in other parts of the publication, but even to other writings of his. The Attorney-General knew this—somebody had taught him law enough to know, that if he set forth in the indictment the whole of the publication, he would at once burn his fingers. The jury must be satisfied that he (Mr. Cobbett) put forth this publication for the purpose of inciting the labourers to do that which was charged in the indictment; that was ‘to set fire to ricks, to pull down houses, to break machinery, and to commit outrages.’”

The defendant then proceeded to comment on the article, and to read several other passages, which had not been set out in the indictment, and he argued that the tendency of the whole article was the reverse of that which had been ascribed to it by the Attorney-General, and which the partial extracts might lead some persons to suppose. He said in one passage, that “out of evil came good.” But was that evil? But he had also said, that he did not wish people to do evil that good might come from it. Having cautioned them against any such conclusion, he went onto say that the outrages had done good, and he gave his reason for that; but it did not follow, because he thought good had arisen, that he approved of the evil; much less that he intended to incite the people to commit them, when he said just the contrary. Would the jury find a false perfidious Whig, who would not tell them that the revolution was a glorious revolution, and yet it was the overturning of a king, and the downfall of his dynasty? A flash of lightning which set fire to a barn or a rick, might do much good. This trial would do a great deal of good; it had done a great deal already, as it had enabled him in the presence and hearing of this great audience, to cast off those vile slanders which had been circulated against him. In one of the articles there was a petition to parliament signed by himself. The jury would take that petition and read

it, for they were bound to take the whole publication together, and judge of its effects accordingly. In that petition he stated the case of the wretched labourers, their sufferings, and the causes of those sufferings. In that petition he had defended the farmers, and showed it was not they who were in fault. How then could it be the tendency of the publication to stir up the labourers to destroy the property of the farmers, when it showed that it was not they who had caused the distress? Nay, it even referred to Lord Melbourne's circular, a document of a conciliatory nature, and the only one of that character which had emanated from the Whigs; it had referred to that circular to show the labourers that they need not despair, as the government sympathised with their sufferings, and directed its attention to the causes of them; yet now it was contended that his object was to incite them to acts of violence.

He now came, he said, to the great and obvious object of the article, and he would put it to the jury, when they should have carefully read it all through, whether they could entertain the slightest doubt that his object was, to save the lives of those who were convicted under the special commission. When that commission went out, he anticipated great shedding of blood, and he therefore felt himself called upon to endeavour to prevent it. Now let the jury read the article in question, from beginning to end, and say whether they could possibly come to any other conclusion, than that it was written for the express purpose of preventing blood from being shed. Let that fact then be borne in mind. Now the object being to save the lives of these unfortunate men, was it possible to suppose that he (Mr. Cobbett) would incite them to acts of outrage, which would of course be the means of defeating his object? He repeated that his only object was to save the lives of these men, and for that purpose he had availed himself of the licence allowed by Paley, and had had recourse to every means in his power to accomplish his object; he had invited all parts of the country, the parishes of the metropolis, to petition on this behalf. Such was his object; such the tendency of the article for which this foul, malicious, scandalous, and wicked indictment had been preferred against him.

The defendant here read over various parts of the publication containing the alleged libel, and again put it to the jury whether it was possible to come to any other conclusion, than that his object in publishing it was what he now stated; and if so, then he was perfectly satisfied that they would pronounce him not guilty, although he admitted that in so doing they would at the same time be pronouncing a verdict of guilty on this Whig government. Mr. Cobbett now referred to his other publications, such as "Rural Economy," to show that he was an encourager of the solid and peaceful comforts of the labourer, not an instigator to crimes; and told the jury that he would give them, to that effect, the evidence of no less a man than the Lord Chancellor of this very Whig government.

In the year 1816, he (Mr. Cobbett) had published a letter to the Luddites in Nottinghamshire. Towards the close of the last year, the Lord Chancellor applied to him for leave to re-publish that letter, in a work called the "Library of Useful Knowledge," in order that it might be circulated amongst the very labourers whom he (the defendant) was now charged with inciting to acts of violence. What times were these! Would the Lord Chancellor come to Cobbett's sedition shop to get something wherewith to quiet the labourers? Nay, the Attorney General himself was another member of the same society that wished to publish his letter. When the Lord Chancellor made the application, he asked, at the same time, on what terms I would consent to the re-publication. Now, I disliked the use of the word "terms," but replied, I would consent to its being re-published on this condition, that it should be published altogether, and not garbled by extracting any portions of it, because I would not allow those parts which set forth the rights of the labourer to be left out, whilst all that was calculated to throw censure upon the violence which their wrongs had goaded them on to commit, should go forth to the world. Upon this condition I gave my consent to the re-publication, and lent him a copy of the book. By so doing the learned judge will tell you I re-published the letter. I do not know what the Lord Chancellor did with it, but I shall ask him by and bye, as I intend to put him into the box. What then

has the Lord Chancellor done? As an author, he takes my book to re-publish; as Lord Chancellor, he applies to his colleague, with whom "he had stood together in their chivalry," to institute a proceeding against me, to punish me as the author of a libel, calculated to excite the labourers to outrage and disorder. Here then is the Lord Chancellor in November borrowing my book, in the next month prosecuting me for libel, and a false, malicious, and seditious person, to be robbed of property, and of life too, if the Whigs were to have the power of causing it. I have lived twenty-one years under a Tory administration, and under six Tory Attorney-Generals, but have never been prosecuted, although, if the present were considered a libel, I have written plenty of a similar description. The country has been ruled with rods by the Tories, but the Whigs scourged them with scorpions."

The defendant concluded by declaring, that whatever might be the verdict of the jury, if he were doomed to spend his last breath in a dungeon, he would pray to God to bless his country; he would curse the Whigs, and leave his revenge to his children and the labourers of England.

Mr. Cobbett then sat down amidst loud demonstrations of applause by numerous persons, which the officers with difficulty suppressed.

MR. COBBETT. I will thank your Lordship to let Henry Brougham be called.—Lord Brougham then entered the court from the judges private room, and was sworn by the officer of the court.

MR. COBBETT. Does your Lordship recollect ever applying to me for a copy of my letter, addressed to the Luddites, against the breaking of machinery?

LORD BROUGHAM. I recollect making some application, I believe through the secretary, to a society to which I belong, for a copy of a paper written by you some years ago, the date of which we could not recollect, and also applying for permission to make use of it by republication. I have no recollection of the mode of application; it is possible I applied through the medium of your son. I think I had some intercourse with your son, respecting his admission to Lincoln's-inn.

A letter was handed to his Lordship, who admitted it to be in his hand-writing. It was read as follows:—

“Dear Sir—Though I could not attend myself at the Bench when you called, being engaged in the House of Lords, I took care all should be done correctly. I want you to ask your father about the date of a letter he has written against the breaking of machinery, as a society with which I am connected, is working on the same grounds, and he might perhaps, on proper terms, give us the benefit of his labour.”

LORD MELBOURNE was then called and sworn.

MR. COBBETT. Does your Lordship recollect a man named Thomas Goodman, who was sentenced to suffer death?

LORD MELBOURNE. Yes.

MR. COBBETT. Upon what grounds did he receive his Majesty's pardon?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL objected to so irregular an inquiry, and the Lord Chief Justice decided that such a question could not be put.

MR. COBBETT said, as that was his Lordship's opinion, he had no further questions to put to this witness.

LORD RADNOR sworn and examined by Mr. Cobbett: Had known him (the defendant) upwards of thirty years, and, during that period, had been a constant reader of his writings. From what he (witness) had seen of him, and read of his works, he did not think he was a person likely to excite the working classes to outrage against their masters, or any one else, but quite the reverse.

The examination of this witness having closed the defendants case

LORD TENTERDEN, in summing up the evidence, stated that the language of the article in question seemed certainly strongly calculated to affect the purpose charged against the defendant, but that was a question exclusively for the jury.

The jury retired about a quarter past six o'clock, and shortly afterwards his Lordship retired to his private room. After sending to inquire two or three times if the jury were likely to agree, and being answered in the negative, his Lordship left the court at half-past nine o'clock. About one o'clock the jury sent

out several notes to their friends, apprising them that there was no probability of their coming to a decision, and that, therefore, they need not expect them home all night.

At eight o'clock on the following morning Lord Tenterden arrived at the court. At a quarter past nine the jury entered the box, and were asked whether they were agreed in their verdict. The Foreman of the jury said they were not agreed, nor was it likely that they should come to a conclusion one way or the other, and it was evident they would not yield. The jury had now been locked up for fifteen hours, and many of them were so fatigued, that if they were to be locked up again, serious consequences might follow. Lord Tenterden inquired on what ground they differed?—The jury intimated that, two jurymen had declared their sentiments so strongly that it was impossible to expect them to yield.

LORD TENTERDEN. Then, gentlemen, you are discharged.

Thus did Mr. Cobbett escape the dreadful vengeance that had been prepared for him by his Whig persecutors. That his innocence of any guilty intention to excite the agricultural labourers to acts of lawless violence, was clearly proved must be evident to any one who has carefully read his able defence. Nay, even Lord Brougham's evidence goes at once to destroy every charge that had been brought against him, for if he really had been the seditious and restless spirit represented in the indictment, surely his Lordship would have been the last person to have been in treaty with him for the republication of a work written by the defendant, at a period when his political opinions were exactly the same that they were when the alleged libel was sent out to the world. But the whole charge was too trumperry to be maintained; the honest portion of the jury resolved to stand between an oppressed man and the vengeance of the law, and Mr. Cobbett escaped the heavy doom that the malice of his enemies had prepared for him.

In the following year (1832) the Bill for the Reform of Parliament having passed the two houses, and obtained the assent of the King, it was a natural consequence that a dissolution should take place, and a seat in the Legisla-

ture, the great object of Mr. Cobbett's ambition, now seemed certain. After the rising of Parliament the registration of the new constituency under the Reform Bill, and the other preparations for a general election, were proceeded with. Mr. Cobbett and other candidates were already in the field, and their canvasses concluded while the registration was going on. Although numerous indeed were the questions which arose on the interpretation of the act, and the difficulties which occurred in proving value, the professional gentlemen, to whom this judicial duty was entrusted, made it in general a rule to decide doubts in favour of the claimant. They chose to run the chance of admitting a man who had no franchise, rather than exclude a man who at bottom might have a good one. It was only in cases where an election was to be contested, that the particular claims were examined with much accuracy. The opposing candidates then became opposing litigants, and the process of registration was in some instances drawn out to a great length.

At length the registration of the new constituency having been completed all over the kingdom, Parliament, which had been prorogued by commission on the 10th of October, was dissolved on the 3d of December; and the first general election under the Reform Act took place. The writs were made returnable on the 29th of January, 1833. In regard to the mere machinery of the measure, it worked much more smoothly than had been anticipated. Even in the most populous places, the polling was concluded within the two days allowed by the act; and no time was expended in examining votes. The name was in the register, and that was sufficient.

At this time there were three parties in the field. First came the ministerial candidates; next came the Tories, now called Conservatives, who thought ministers had already gone too far; and last, but not least, were the Radicals, who were determined to spur ministers on to go a great deal farther in their task of reforming public abuses.

The elections went of course in by far the greater number of instances, in favour of the ministerial candidates, or of candidates who professed the same general views, and declared their adherence to a reform-

ing ministry. Thus the ministerial candidates obtained a majority which, if increased by the radical members, who were willing to go all lengths with them in one direction, was overwhelming, and which, even without them, seemed to be as decisive a majority as a minister could wish. The professed radicals stood principally for the new-created boroughs, where a large constituency seemed to offer them the best safeguard against the bribery and corruption of the vanquished Tories.

Mr. Cobbett started for Manchester, but having failed there was returned by the honest men of Oldham, and thus, after years of labour and toil in behalf of the people, he at length found himself placed in that honourable situation to which he had so frequently aspired. He now felt that he could serve the cause for which he had laboured so incessantly and resolving to suffer no opportunity to pass by that might prove his ardent love for liberty and free institutions, he prepared to take his seat in the reformed House of Commons.

There is little doubt, however, that his death is in some measure attributable to the additional fatigue and labour devolved upon him in the discharge of his parliamentary duties. In the House of Commons he has somewhat disappointed the expectations that most of his admirers formed of him. He despised the conventionalities that are held sacred in the representative assembly, and had neither the temper nor the tact necessary to constitute a ready and effective debater. Beyond two or three good set speeches upon the Stamp Duties, the Excise, the Assessed Taxes, and the horrible spy system in the Metropolitan Police force, his parliamentary career has been a comparative blank. Not that he has not said many good things at the table of the House, that no one else could or would have said, but that they were altogether unadapted for the assembly in which they were spoken. They excited our admiration of his talent, and our regret that he had not had a seat in the house some thirty years earlier. How different he was as a lecturer many of our readers well know. The ease of his manner, the mastery over his subject, the purity and strength of his diction, the power of his argumentation, and the felicity of his illustrations, rendered him, in this order of public speaking,

the greatest man since the time of Demosthenes. We are not sorry, however, that he has been tried in Parliament, nor are we disappointed that the trial was a failure as to any influence of the House of Commons. The house was not pure enough, nor Mr. Cobbett young enough, to conform himself to their somewhat eccentric modes of proceeding.

As the meeting of the first reformed Parliament approached, public attention was directed with some anxiety towards its probable temper and deliberations. The result of the general election, as we have already seen, was decidedly in favour of the Whig ministry. The great majority of the house consisted of members inclined to follow and support them; and as there seldom could be an occasion on which the two divisions of the opposition, differing more from each other than either of them did from the ministry; could be expected to unite, every thing seemed to promise that the government would be omnipotent in Parliament. Their measures might fall far short of what was expected and desired by the lovers of yet more rigid reforms, and might go far beyond what the conservatives deemed safe or convenient; but the ministers were sure of being joined by the one of those parties to overcome the resistance or check the fervour of the other. To one danger, indeed, ministers were exposed—their performances must either fall greatly short of what they had promised, and produce disappointment, or they must throw themselves, to support their popularity, into a career of indiscriminate change, on which they did not wish voluntarily to enter.

The public agitation which had been created and fostered in the great mass of the people, while urging on the Reform Bill, had produced extravagant expectations, that the meeting of a reformed Parliament would necessarily be followed by the redress of every thing evil—that all taxes complained of would forthwith disappear—that the Corn-laws would fall to make cheap bread that the wages of labour would be increased, while the price of all things necessary to the support, or comfortable enjoyment of life would be reduced.

The Parliament about which so much expectation had been raised, was opened by commission on the 29th of January, 1833, when the election of the Speaker having taken place, the King's speech and the usual address to

his Majesty came under the consideration of the house. To the one which immediately emanated from the ministers, a violent opposition was raised by many of the more radical members, which terminated with Mr. Cobbett's first effort in Parliament. On the bringing up of the report, he moved that the whole of the address should be rejected, and that another which he proposed, to the following effect, should be adopted: "assuring his Majesty that the House of Commons would direct its most serious attention to the papers which his Majesty had directed to be laid on the table of the house relating to Portugal and Holland, and would anxiously consider the questions relating to the charters of the Bank of England and the East India Company; thanking his Majesty for having suggested a very great alteration with respect to the temporalities of the church, and assuring his Majesty that the house would enter into the examination of that subject without passion or prejudice, thanking his Majesty for having directed the estimates to be prepared with all due economy, and expressing regret that his Majesty had not been advised to suggest the propriety of lessening the burdens of the suffering community, and assuring him that the house would investigate the causes of distress, and institute measures to produce effectual and permanent relief; informing his Majesty, that the house was ready to adopt every constitutional mode of controlling and punishing the disturbers of the public peace in Ireland, and of strengthening those ties which connected the two counties; deeming that their separation would be fraught with destruction to the peace and welfare of his Majesty's dominions, and assuring His Majesty that the house was determined to go into a full consideration of the manifold grievances under which the Irish people laboured.

This amended address was of course not approved of by ministers, but being pressed to a division, there were 28 ayes, and 323 noes—thus rejecting Mr. Cobbett's address by a majority of 300.

Thus defeated in the outset of his parliamentary career, Mr. Cobbett only resolved the more vehemently to urge a variety of motions, which, had they been successful, would have tended greatly towards the extended freedom and happiness of the people. As it was, however, he was

obliged to content himself with merely bringing them forward, with the certainty of seeing them rejected by large majorities of that house which had so lately been reformed. But even under all these disadvantages Mr. Cobbett's consistency and manliness of purpose was distinctly seen by those who were not blinded by prejudice against a man who thus dared to stand alone in a virtuous cause.

Whenever members, to whatever party they might belong, brought forward measures that they considered would be beneficial to the great mass of the people, William Cobbett's name was always to be found among their most ardent supporters. For the Whigs we know he had no great partiality, and towards the Tories he entertained a feeling of the most sovereign contempt. At the head of his own small party, he stood boldly to resist their bad measures, and gallantly to support those which were calculated to increase the privileges of his oppressed countrymen. He loved the good cause he had so long cherished, and his watchful eye was ever directed towards that point from whence he hoped justice might at length be obtained for those whom he advocated.

On the 27th of June, 1833, Mr. Cobbett presented a petition to the House of Commons, from a large number of the inhabitants of Camberwell and Walworth, being members of a political union in those villages. The petitioners complained that one William Popay, became a member of their union about fifteen months previously; that he attended their meetings, and frequently urged the members to adopt the most violent course against the existing government; that he dressed himself in plain clothes the more readily to deceive and lead them on to his infamous designs, and that they (the petitioners), were in the utmost peril of falling into the evils he had designed, when chance led to the discovery of his motives, and the dreadful fate he had prepared for them.

Having read the whole of the petition to the house, Mr. Cobbett proceeded to animadvert with the utmost severity on the baseness of the policeman, Popay, in the course he had pursued towards those unsuspecting victims of his evil designs. He even accused government with being privy to the whole undertaking, and concluded by praying that

a committee should be appointed to investigate the whole affair. This, after some opposition, was finally acceded to, and after a vast mass of evidence had been heard, the committee declared that the charges brought against Popay had been clearly proved, and that they had detected many instances in which he had disguised himself in plain clothes for the purpose of misleading those parties whom he had joined and professed to agree with. The result was, that Popay was discharged from the Police force, and there, for the present, the matter rested.

After this exposure of an infamous system of espionage, Mr. Cobbett brought forward many motions of the utmost importance with varied success. We have not, however, space even to enumerate them in this brief memoir of the illustrious deceased.

We are now brought to the period of Mr. Cobbett's last illness and death, which took place on Thursday, June 18th, at Normandy Farm, Surrey, whither he had retired from the fatigue of his parliamentary duties, in the hope of recovering and re-establishing his health, which had latterly become much impaired. This melancholy event is thus described by his son, James Paul :—

“ A great inclination to inflammation of the throat had caused him annoyance from time to time, for several years, and, as he got older, it enfeebled him more. He was suffering from one of these attacks during the late spring, and it will be recollected, that when the Marquis of Chandos brought on his motion for a repeal of the malt-tax, my father attempted to speak, but could not make his voice audible beyond the few Members who sat round him. He remained to vote on that motion, and increased his ailment; but, on the voting of supplies, on the nights of Friday, the 15th, and Monday, the 18th of May, he exerted himself so much, and sat so late, that he laid himself up. He determined, nevertheless, to attend the house again on the evening of the Marquis of Chandos's motion on agricultural distress on the 25th of May; and the exertion of speaking and remaining late to vote on that occasion, were too much for one already severely unwell. He went down to his farm early on the morning after this last debate, and had

resolved to rest himself thoroughly, and get rid of his hoarseness and inflammation. On Thursday night last (June 11th) he felt unusually well, and imprudently drank tea in the open air; but he went to bed apparently in better health. In the early part of the night, he was taken violently ill, and on Friday and Saturday was considered in a dangerous state by the medical attendant. On Sunday he revived again; and on Monday gave us hope that he would yet be well. He talked feebly, but in the most collected and sprightly manner, upon politics and farming; wished for 'four days rain' for the Cobbett corn and the root crops; and, on Wednesday, he could remain no longer shut up from the fields, but desired to be carried round the farm; which being done, he criticised the work that had been going on in his absence, and detected some little deviation from his orders, with all the quickness that was so remarkable in him. On Wednesday night (June 17th) he grew more and more feeble, and was evidently sinking; but he continued to answer with perfect clearness, every question that was put to him. In the last half hour his eyes became dim; and at ten minutes after one, p.m., he leaned back, closed them as if to sleep, and died without a gasp."

Mr. Cobbett's personal appearance was somewhat eccentric, but prepossessing. Hazlitt has described it so well that we shall quote him. "The only time I ever saw him," he remarks, "he seemed to me a very pleasant man—easy of access, affable, clear-headed, simple, and mild in his manner, deliberate and unruffled in his speech, through some of his expressions were not very qualified. His figure is tall and portly. He has a good sensible face—rather full, with little grey eyes, a hard, square forehead, a ruddy complexion, with hair grey or powdered, and had on a scarlet broadcloth waistcoat, with the flaps of the pockets hanging down, as was the custom for gentlemen-farmers in the last century, or as we see it in the pictures of Members of Parliament in the reign of George I. I certainly did not think less favourably of him for seeing him." Mr. Cobbett's appearance underwent little change, at least little that was apparent to casual observers, towards the close of his life. He was less erect

in his posture, and more feeble and slovenly in his gait. But he still retained the appearance of a hale and cheerful farmer. His costume, when he went to the House, was generally a suit of woollen clothes, of a very light mixture in colour, approaching to a dead white; and when he rose at the table to address the House, those who had not seen him previously, although they could not repress a smile at the singularity of his appearance, experienced an involuntary feeling of veneration for the person before them.

We should only be repeating what all persons, competent to judge, whatever their political opinions may be, concur in admitting, were we to say that Mr. Cobbett was one of the most extraordinary men of his day. Thrown upon the world at a very early age, without "book learning," without money, without a friend to direct his course, and habituated only to habits of rural industry, he at once procured for himself the confidence of all persons with whom he had intercourse, and gradually made his way from the stool in a "dungeon" called an attorney's office; or, as he himself said, at the close of the Oldham election, "from a plough-boy in a smock-frock, and clogs well nailed," to the most honourable post which an English gentleman can fill—that of representing a populous and intelligent borough in the British Parliament.

As a writer, Mr. Cobbett was unrivalled. No man has written so much, and so well. To appropriate the language of a contemporary, his very antipodes in politics (the Standard) "Mr. Cobbett was by far the first political writer of his age. In the attributes of a severely correct and unaffected, a clear and a vigorous style, Mr. Cobbett was wholly without a rival, we venture to affirm, since the day of Swift; nor did this necessary staple of good writing want the ornaments of copious and striking illustration, or strong and well connected argument. From the immense magazine of Mr. Cobbett's voluminous compositions may, without difficulty, be collected samples of the highest eloquence to be found in our language; while it would be nearly impossible for the most malignant jealousy to winnow from the mass a single dull or feeble article! And let it be remembered that

nearly all was improvisation ; the labour of a mind constantly employed in pouring forth its thoughts, without, during forty years, a day's perhaps an hour's opportunity for preliminary rumination or subsequent review ! This must have been a great mind ; and, undoubtedly, Mr. Cobbett was a great man."—In stating a case, Mr. Cobbett was unequalled. He at once seized on the circumstances which favoured the views he wished to support, and seldom failed to produce the impression at which he aimed. What he could not effect by direct statement, he attained by *ineundo*. He was shrewd beyond most men, and he could detect and expose a subterfuge more readily than most men. Mr. Cobbett's mind, however, was not of great grasp or comprehensiveness. He was not capable of embracing and glancing at once into all the parts of a vast or complicated subject, or of generalising from special facts. Of an insulated case, however, he could make the most. His descriptions were striking and vivid, and his illustrations apt and forcible. He wrote upon all matters to be understood by all ; and we do not recollect a single instance in which he has failed in his purpose. In no other writer can we find so much of bitterness, and abuse towards and of individuals, as in the writings of Mr. Cobbett. He was unforgiving of the offences of public men, and unchanging in his enmity towards them. Let him but once detect a lurking disposition to political insincerity, or a covert predilection for anti-popular measures, and no subsequent abjuration of former admitted errors—no apparent ardour in prosecuting an opposite policy, could restore the offender to his favour or confidence. He ever afterwards looked upon him as hollow of heart, and vented his spleen in bitter, and not unfrequently in the coarsest and foulest language. Let our readers take a specimen from the Register of Oct. 5th, 1833.—Those familiar with that work will recollect many passages equally bitter and powerful. The first article in this Register is an answer to an attack which appeared upon Mr. Cobbett in the Morning Chronicle of the 21st of the preceeding September, and is addressed to the "Base Editor" of that paper, to whom the writer says, "I do not name you ; I cannot legally name you ; because according to the practice of all depredating reptiles, you keep

out of sight; you hide your base carcase, while you poke out your poisoned stabber. I will not name your master, for the same reason that I lately withdrew an action against him, namely, because he once not only acted a just but a generous part towards me, and that, too, at a time when wretches like you thought I was down never to rise again. I must, for the present, at least, content myself with you, creeping, and venomous, and nameless reptile as you are." After inserting the article from the Chronicle, Mr. Cobbett, proceeds to comment upon it, which he does in his most bitterly-powerful style. One of the accusations was, that he wished to prevent a reform in the corporations. This he denies, and refers to what he had formerly urged in favour of such reform. Then comes the following touch, which no other writer could pen without exciting disgust. In Mr. Cobbett's writings it opens a source of positive enjoyment and mirth:—

"My readers will all remember this. I am sure I received applause enough for it at the time, from crowds of my fellow-citizens of London. This vagabond remembers it, too; for he, as far as he dared, took part with the spoilers; and yet, the tax-hunting wretch has now the audacity to represent me as an enemy to corporation reform.

'Ah!' the hungry vagabond will say, 'what do I care for this?—what I mean by corporation reform is, a lazy life and a good parcel of public money for roaring Rushton and pis-aller Parkes, and plenty of guttling and guzzling for me along with them. We want to put an end to the turtle-eating at Guildhall, and to the money put under the plates after the dinners of the Companies; but we want to guttle and guzzle ourselves, and to have money put under our plates.' This is the real language of the heart of this vagabond, and as I cannot prevent this new race of guttlers and guzzlers from being filled, I am pulling them out, at any rate, and letting people see them and their devourings. This is what has stirred the gall of this fellow, and of the crew that is urging him on."

Having disposed of his accusations, Mr. Cobbett thus addresses the editor of the Chronicle:—

"And now, wretched caitiff; hungry, gaunt, cadaverous looking devil, you who predict that the end of my life, political and natural, is approaching, what have you to say

in your defence? What reparation; no not reparation, for offering your worthless carcass to be flung on my land, to be used as manure for my cabbages, would not be reparation; but, what excuse have you for putting forth this string of calumnies and abuse! I have attacked you; that is to say, you mean, that I have knocked you away when you were coming at me with your nasty, rusty, and blunt old knife. It was you attacked me: I had not dragged you out by the ears: it was roaring Rushton, pis-aller Parkes, and Wood called John, that I had dragged out. I saw you, to be sure at your murderous work upon the poor old Chronicle: I would have gladly beaten you away; but if her owner chose to have her murdered, it was no affair of mine. But, when you began raising your old jagged knife at me, it was high time to look about me, having no fancy for a cutting and slashing, more like a sawing, such as you had been performing so long upon my poor old acquaintance, the Chronicle. I know, that in answer to these interrogatives of mine, you will come with a syllogism, thus:—

“1. It is necessary that I should live, and, of course, necessary that I should eat.

“2. In order to be able to eat, I must slander you.

“3. Therefore, it is necessary that I slander you.

“This is the way that a libellous poet reasoned with a French minister, whom he had lampooned. The minister answered him, as I might at once answer you, *by denying your major*: and I do deny that it is at all necessary that you should live. Necessary to whom and for what, I should be glad to know? Are you doing any good in the world? Are you of any use upon this earth? If you were to go under it to-morrow morning at daylight, would it be said by any human being, in the evening, any thing had been lost to the world, and particular to the poor old Chronicle, in consequence of your demise? Do you convey any instruction, which can be of practical good to any human being? Do you till the land and cause any thing to grow? Do you assist to make the clothing or the houses, to cook the victuals, to turn the barley into drink; to make those articles of furniture which are for the use, ease, or pleasure of man? Do you curry the horses, or milk the cows (except as a rural policeman)? Do you polish the knives, or turn

the brown into black on the shoes? No: none of these; no earthly thing do you do, that tends at all to those purposes which conduce to the ease and happiness of a people. You are a mere consumer of food, clothing, houses and other things which ought to be kept for the use of those who produce them, or who possess the lands, ships, or factories, or workshops, out of which they all spring. How, then, do you attempt to maintain the affirmative of your major proposition; namely, that it is necessary that you should live? I am arguing, if the case were not so plain, at great disadvantage, because the proof ought to rest with you, not the disproof with me."

For power, raciness, and coarseness, this is unparalleled; and if the reader has any faculty for perceiving the ludicrous or the humorous, he cannot pursue it without a roar of laughter.

Mr. Cobbett has been charged with insufferable egotism, but nothing but sheer stupidity or pure malignity could induce such a charge. Hazlitt has truly said, when speaking of his style,—“His egotism is delightful, for there is no affectation in it. He does not talk of himself for lack of something to write about; but because that some circumstance had happened to himself which is the best possible illustration of the subject; and he is not the man to shrink from giving the best possible illustration of the subject, from a squeamish delicacy. He likes both himself and his subject too well. He does not put himself before it, and say—‘admire me first’—but places us in the same situation with himself, and makes us see all that he does. There is no blind-man’s-buff, no conscious hints, no awkward ventriloquism, no testimonials of applause, no abstract, senseless self-competency, no smuggled admiration of his own person by proxy; it is all plain and above-board. He writes himself plain William Cobbett, strips himself quite as naked as any body would wish—in a word, his egotism is full of individuality, and has room for very little vanity in it.”—The writer of this well understood the character of William Cobbett.

We have already enumerated some of Mr. Cobbett’s publications. The following works are omitted, some of them having been published since 1829;—*Paper against Gold, the Poor Man’s Friend, the English Gardener, the*

Emigrant's Guide, Advice to Young Men, Manchester Lectures, Tour in Scotland, French and English Dictionary, Stepping Stone to the English Grammar, Geographical Dictionary, Twopenny Trash, the Life of President Jackson, Rural Rides, the Regency and Reign of George IV. a Legacy to Labourers, and a Legacy to Parsons.

From these two lists of Mr. Cobbett's books it will be seen that much as he has written upon politics, in his Register, and other publications, he has by no means confined himself to that description of writing. The first and greatest object of his life was to ameliorate or improve the condition of the agricultural labourers; and in his "Poor Man's Friend," his "Cottage Economy," and his "Advice to Young Men," will be found a body of sound, practical, and valuable instruction, not to be met with in the works of any other writer.

We believe that Mr. Cobbett's character, as to kindness, disinterestedness, and generosity, has been very ill understood by the public. It is true, that he has not laboured gratuitously: and why should he have done so? Has such been the custom with those who represent him as a selfish and mercenary man? It is mighty consistent in those who live upon the fruits of other people's industry—and such is the mode of living with many of his assailants—to hold him up as sordid and selfish, because he received what was deemed to be the marketable value of his labours. Why should the novel writer or the dramatist be free from reproach while he exacts the highest amount that he can procure for his productions; while Mr. Cobbett, whose genius and talents were second to those of no man, and whose labour and industry were prodigiously beyond those of all, is to be set down as destitute of all the higher and more generous qualities of mankind, for doing merely the same thing, in regard to production, not simply adapted to afford rational amusement, but to promote the liberty and enlarge the happiness of mankind?

O'Connell had called in Bolt-court, and intimated his intention of following Cobbett to the grave. Mr. O'Connell's name, however, appearing in the evening papers, as chairman at a public meeting to be held on Saturday morning, threw considerable doubt upon the report. It was rumoured that if Mr. O'Connell did attend, he would speak over the grave. John Leach, Esq. late M.P. for the western division of Surrey. Mrs. Mellish, and Kean, bankers, of Godalming; and Mr. Cobbett's four sons, William, John, James, and Richard, were the only persons that it was positively known would attend.

Farnham Church and Churchyard.—Farnham church is a commodious building of some antiquity; one tablet, to the memory of a Mr. Gwynne, bears the date of 1570. There are a number of tombstones in the churchyard to the memory of aged persons, several exceeding ninety years; and that the town is altogether a healthy one, may be inferred from the fact that, many persons are living in it, approaching the centurian epoch: one, an old hop-planter, named Mathew, is said to have passed that patriarchal age. Farnham is a neat town, with a population of about five thousand, described in the "Domesday Book," as the "land of the Bishop of Winchester." Farnham Castle is one of the residences of the present bishop, who arrived on Friday. From nine o'clock until twelve on Saturday morning, visitors from all places, and persons of all stations, visited the church and churchyard, the grave lying open for its occupant.

A hearse and four, and two mourning coaches and four, were the only vehicles provided at Farnham. It was arranged that the other mourning coaches should join the procession as they fell into the line of road from London. The bell tolled out heavily at intervals. Mr. Alderman Scales and many personal friends of the deceased arrived a little before noon.

ORDER OF THE PROCESSION FROM NORMANBY.

THE HEARSE

(drawn by four horses).

Mourning coach, with four horses
(Messrs. Cobbett, Fielden, and John Leach).

Second mourning coach, with four horses
(Messrs. E. Leach, M. Knowles, Donnelly, Gutsell,
Oldfield, and another).

Third coach, holding six, was from London.

At the Greyhound, between Ashchurch and Farnham, the procession was joined by a postchaise from London, followed by private carriages, in which were D. O'Connell, Esq., M. P., and D. W. Harvey, Esq. M.P. Then three chaises, and Mr. Leach's private carriage.

At about twelve o'clock the movement had been made at Normandy. At the White Post, about a quarter of a mile from the town, where the old Guildford road commences, Mr. Gibson and some other gentlemen of Farnham were collected, intending to fall into the procession on foot.

As the coaches were seen approaching the town, many of the inhabitants, wearing hat-bands, hastened to meet and join in the procession, which entered Farnham church as follows:—

Mr. O'Connell, (standing outside.)

Mr. George Johnson (undertaker.)

Three Bearers, THE BODY. Three Bearers.

William Cobbett (the eldest son), John, James, and Richard Cobbett.

D. W. Harvey, Esq., M.P.

— Knowles, Esq.

Captain Donnelly

— Gutsell, Esq.

— Faithful, Esq.

— Beck, Esq.

— Coppin, Esq.

John Leach, Esq.

E. Leach, Esq.

— Fielden, Esq.

— Oldfield, Esq.

— Elliman, Esq.

— Grey, Esq.

— Mellish, Esq. (of Godalming.)

— Complin, Esq.

— Rogers, Esq.

— Lutchins, Esq.

Alderman Seales.

T. Wakley, Esq., M.P.

— Swaine, Esq.

— Stares, Esq. (of Fitchfield)

Samuel Wells, Esq.

Many other gentlemen joined the procession at the door; it became, therefore, impossible to take the names in the order they entered, the crowd pressed so vehemently forward as to obscure the view and impede one another.

The Rev. John Menzies then read the 39th and 90th

Psalms, with the usual portion of the chapter from St. Paul's Epistles, and then led the way to the grave. The coffin, which was exceedingly heavy, was lowered slowly into its earthly home, and the burial service was read; during which we were surprised to observe Mr. O'Connell put on his cap, which, being of green, and having a gold band, was the more remarkable. During the service, Mr. John Cobbett with difficulty sustained himself on Captain Donnelly's arm. He wept bitterly, and was, not without some difficulty, removed from the grave. His brothers, James and Richard, who were also deeply affected, bore him into the vestry. As the mourners left the grave the multitude rushed forward, so as to make it a task of difficulty to see the coffin. The inscription was simply—

WILLIAM COBBETT,

M.P. FOR OLDHAM,

AGED 73,

DIED 18TH JUNE, 1835."

The mourners, with the exception of the Messrs. Cobbett, did not return to their carriages. Mr. O'Connell, and some portion of the party, walked to the Bush Inn, some of the others to Mr. Grove's, the Lion and Lamb. It was impossible to compute the number present with any degree of accuracy. Along the line of road persons had placed themselves in groups on all the elevations, and subsequently followed in the train. In the churchyard every flat monument held a little knot of persons, and the church was filled in body and galleries.

A great number of ladies were present, but the majority were of the other sex.

Previous to filling the grave a singular ceremony took place. Three flat stones were lowered upon the coffin (apparently wedges of slate or iron stone) so as to intervene between that and any coffin that may hereafter be placed upon it. Hundreds pressed forward for the last look; some picked up portions of the earth, or plucked a little of the herbage around the grave; and the coaches that arrived from Southampton about four o'clock stopped an extra quarter of an hour in changing, to enable the passengers to step to the churchyard, and see the last of William Cobbett. The funeral and all bearing relation to it

was conducted in a style of simplicity and propriety quite in keeping with him to whose honour it was performed.

Some scattered anecdotes of Cobbett's family, &c., we subjoin; it is roadside matter, but obtained generally from those whom we have reason to believe knew him well, and who have shown an interest at his funeral highly honourable to him and to themselves. Many members of Mr. Cobbett's establishment were in attendance, among others Mr. Dean and Mr. Marshall (the William Marshall named in his letters from Ireland).

Mrs. Cobbett and her daughters were in the town of Farnham, and of the personal friends and admirers of the man we could furnish a long list.

Mr. Cobbett has left seven children; of the four sons, three are at the bar; the fourth, Richard, is articled to an attorney (Mr. Faithful). The daughters (Ann, Ellen, and Susan) are unmarried, and we believe all his sons are so too.

Cobbett's grandfather lived next door to the Queen's Head, a little roadside inn, about a mile from Farnham, on the road to Waverley. A cousin of Mr. C.'s, (Mr. Cæsar, a pastry-cook) lives in that town, and some other relatives are scattered about the adjacent places.

Mr. O'Connell, whilst standing beside the grave, was asked some questions, which we could not hear, by Mr. Harvey and Mr. Mellish, the honourable gentleman's reply as we caught it, was to this effect:—"No; I would have spoken, but his family seem to think it had better not be done; and, of course, it rests with them—they know best." At an inn in the town Mr. Michael Scales had expressed his intention of following Mr. O'Connell's speech by a few remarks, and some persons affirmed M. D. W. Harvey would pronounce an eulogium upon the deceased. These rumours proved to be wholly unfounded. After the burial service any oration would have been superfluous, and any eloquence, however sparkling, must fall flatly upon the ear which has drank in the words of that sublime composition.

The grave has now closed for ever on the mortal remains of William Cobbett, who, during, a long active, and labourious life, has engrossed, by the mere force of natural genius, unaided by scholastic education, a far larger share of public notice than any man of past or present times.

Lord North, whose estimate of mental power none will venture to dispute, described Cobbett as the greatest "political reasoner" he ever knew. He was so. It may, perhaps, fall to the lot of few to be so highly gifted, yet the same means for the cultivation of natural capacity are within the reach of those who are inclined to profit by them.

In person, Mr. Cobbett presents the *beau-ideal* of an English farmer of the wealthier class. His frame is cast in a rough manly mould, with which his gait is in thorough keeping; there is much handsomeness about his features, and an expression of firmness and fearlessness strongly indicative of his character. It is at once amusing and interesting to see him in Bolt Court, surrounded with bags of seeds, and other evidences of his skilful and speculative spirit. Something, perhaps, occurs to excite him, and he rises from his chair, and paces up and down the room with ponderous steps, ejaculating denunciations and "helping out his energies" with frequent oaths. This last unseemly habit, his early pursuits, as farmer's boy and soldier, may both account for and excuse.

He has been set down as a lover of money, and there can be no doubt that he properly appreciates the qualities of that essential agent; but we happen to know, that when engaged with company, or otherwise occupied, and applications have been made to him for money, he has many a time handed his purse of uncounted gold to a servant, and continued his conversation or employment. This is no proof of an undue love of lucre; and it is a proof of the unbounded confidence which he places in those about him. Extravagance in living, and foppery in dress, he denounces both in public and private; and in these matters his practice comes in aid of his precepts. Temperate in an extraordinary degree himself, he nevertheless delights to see his dependents in the enjoyment of plain "plenteousness."

The Register is the first business of the day with Mr. Cobbett. Whilst he is dictating, and his secretary writing, the door, is fastened, and no intrusion of any kind allowed. The work completed, the door is instantly unlocked, and access to this extraordinary man is no longer difficult. It may be interesting to state, that the office of secretary was for some time filled by one of his daughters.

In conversation he is remarkably fluent, animated, and informing; he overflows with anecdote, and details the events of a long and varied life, with a spirit of enjoyment and unreserve, which enchants his hearers.

In addition to the political labours of Mr. Cobbett, which amount to nearly a hundred volumes, he has written works on Gardening, and on Grammar; a Dictionary and a Gazetteer; "Cottage Economy," abounding with such fresh and attractive pictures of rural occupations and enjoyments, as to make it painful reading to lovers of nature who live in cities; and—not to attempt anything like an accurate list of his productions—he has given to the world thirteen Sermons, a Spelling Book, the Life of George IV. and a History of the Reformation! His "Rural Rides" can never be forgotten by those who have once perused them. Avoiding the highways whenever it is practicable, he carries us rejoicingly into fields, green lanes, and farm-houses, pointing out as he goes along varieties of soil, and comparing modes of culture; nature animate and inanimate lies before him, and he reads both with an instructed, observant, and reflecting eye. His descriptions—always felicitous—always evincing a raciness and truth unattainable by any other writer, are here peculiarly admirable. What he would have his readers look at with himself, is reflected as in a glass—fresh, sparkling, accurate.

Twelve of the Sermons are beautiful compositions, and may be read with advantage by persons of any age or rank. We cannot say as much for one which he has recently added, and which he entitles "Good Friday; or the Murder of Jesus Christ by the Jews." What vain and unprofitable notions sometimes insinuate themselves into the most acute and powerful minds! The bigoted and preposterous hatred which has clouded the author's better judgment, which deforms this production, is of a piece with his senatorial opposition to the same class of persons. He condemns them *en masse* as usurers! forgetting that usurious practices are as common among Christians as Jews, and that the former are without the excuses which charity and justice find for the latter. To admit Jews into Parliament, he says, would be to legalize blasphemy and unchristianize a country. To encourage liberal feeling, and take off the degrading shackles of intolerance, is,

we conceive, to act in the true spirit of the divine teacher of Christianity, and must lead to anything but the consequences which Mr. Cobbett so gratuitously prophesies. He would bind what Christianity would set free, and keep in darkness what Christianity would enlighten. Certainly he is here seen to no greater advantage than the blind and furious partizans to whom he has been so long and so successfully opposed. To resist Catholic Emancipation, and the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, to uphold the enactments which opened the doors of the legislature to the unprincipled, whilst they barred out the conscientious—all this was professedly done to support true religion—to uphold genuine Christianity. Ignorant and one-sided as were these views, they were natural and consistent in the men who adopted and advocated them; but what do they look like in a COBBETT; Is it to some “constitutional warp” that we are to attribute this and some other errors which have occasionally made the “long and strong arm” of which he boasts, so puny and powerless—that “arm,” but a reed against it, and it is beaten down?

The History of the Reformation has all Mr. Cobbett's customary cleverness and plausibility; and he proves that industry was better rewarded, and poverty more carefully averted, before the Reformation than since. Farther we cannot go with him: we agree rather with an eloquent writer that “the man who denies the value of that great impulse; who says that we ought not to keep up the progress which it aided, but to go back to the point at which it found us, who maintains that mankind is in a less hopeful condition now, when thousands of eager and searching minds are feeling round them on every side, to seize the hem of the garment of Truth, than when no man was permitted to do anything but kiss the robes of the priesthood; when the world is evidently wrestling with the throes of a mighty pregnancy; than when, in tumult and passion, it conceived, three centuries ago, the longborne burthen of promise;—the man who, without being misled by sectarian prepossession, and with an obvious party purpose, can at this day profess this doctrine, is to be classed, not with the lovers of wisdom, or with the Reformers of their kind, but with the noisy hounds of faction.”

It is not by turning back our eyes to the bigotries of the past, that we are to learn charity for the future; it is not by imitating the barbarian tribes, which defied their ancestors, that we are to nourish into the image of God the generations of our descendants; it is not in short, by vindicating the sectarianism of a sect, be it Roman Catholic, Protestant or Hindoo, that we must teach ourselves universal toleration; but by looking at all men, *not as members of sects, but as partakers of a common humanity, whom it will be better for us, than even for them, to bind ourselves by cords of love.*"

The same writer supplies us with a just and admirably written summary of the character of Mr. Cobbett, with some extracts from which we will conclude this memoir. "There is one great merit in Mr. Cobbett—and one only—which is perhaps peculiar to him among the party-writers of the day. There is not a page of his that had ever has come under our notice, wherein there does not breathe throughout, amid all his absurdities of violence and inconsistency, the strongest feeling for the welfare of the people. Many persons will be ready to maintain, because he has shown himself at various times as not very scrupulous for truth, that he has no real and sincere good quality whatsoever, and that he merely writes what is calculated to be popular. But we confess we are inclined to think, from the tone and spirit of his works, that he commonly persuades himself he believes what he is saying, and feels deeply at the moment what he expresses strongly. It is obvious to us, that while he puts forth against his opponents the most measured malignity, there is a true and hearty kindness in all that he writes about, or to, the people. And it would be useful, therefore, to peers and parliamentary orators, and university dogmatists, if they would now and then read the books they always rail at. They would find in them a portrait thrilling with all the pulses of animation; of the thoughts and desires of a class, the largest, and therefore the most important in society; among whom, that which is universal and eternal in our nature, displays itself under a totally different aspect from that which it was among us. Mr. Cobbett's personal consciousness of all which is concealed from us by grey jackets and clouted shoes, has

kept alive his sympathy with the majority of mankind; and this, indeed, is a merit which can be attributed to but few political writers. And far more than this, it is a merit which belongs to no one we remember but himself and Burns, among all the persons that have raised themselves from the lowest condition of life into eminence."

In alluding to the numerous charges that have been from time to time brought against the subject of our memoir, an intelligent writer in Tait's Edinburgh Magazine for the present month, August, thus remarks:—

"Cobbett has often been charged with *inconsistency*; but no reasonable man calls Luther or John Knox inconsistent or apostate, because, being bred Roman Catholic priests, each became converts to Protestantism, and married. Cobbett had a principle of consistency of his own. Find the key to his resolute, self-willed, and obstinate character, and you solve the whole mystery. He would not be in the wrong, or, at least, he would not be convicted. But his good sense, and the candour, which, though not his distinguishing quality, he was not absolutely without, finally triumphed over his infallibility. Nor should it ever be forgotten, that renouncing very flattering prospects, his conversion was on the *unthriving*, the *militant*, the *losing* side, or what for many a year was so; and that, however misled for a time by a crotchet, a caprice, or by violent personal feelings, he never once really flinched from the cause of the People. From the moment of conviction, he stood firmly and undauntedly by his *Order*, and encountered persecution, contumely, and hardship, that would have crushed ten times over, any less resolute spirit. The oppression and injustice which he endured, looks light, because he bore it so well, or *resented* it so fiercely. In one of his lectures, delivered at Manchester in 1831, Cobbett speaks so frankly of his early darkness and error, that to persist in the charge of inconsistency, upon this score, becomes almost ungenerous. We have, indeed, very little doubt that much of his early anti-Jacobinism, arose from the sheer spirit of contradiction, and pugnacity of temper. He was lecturing in Manchester upon the Debt, and his favourite topic of adjustment, when he incidentally used the following words:—"When I was in America, the first time, I was a mere zealous prater of

politics. Finding the whole people railing against my own country, I espoused its cause right or wrong; and the bank having stopped payment in 1797, I defended bank-notes. But I had not been in England three years, before I clearly saw the wickedness and mischievous tendency of the whole system of debts and paper money. So that these are no new notions of mine, at any rate; I have continued to promulgate them for twenty-eight years. In 1806, when the Whigs and Grenvillites came into power, I might have been Under Secretary of State to Mr. Windham, who was then Secretary for the Colonies"—and he tells a story highly honourable to himself, and to the consistency of his opinions, for which we shall refer to the printed lectures.

In his tour in Scotland, during which period the Whig press took great and bitter pains to inflame the public mind against him, by daily reminding the people of his offences against the Scottish nation, and, in former days against the cause of freedom, he indignantly, and sometimes humourously, adverts to these abortive and contemptible attempts to run him down. Approaching the Bridge of Berwick, he says "I descend to the TWEED, and now for the 'antallact.'" As I went over the bridge, my mind filled with reflecting on those who had crossed it before me, saying to myself, 'This has been the pass of all those pestiferous feelosophers whom I have been combating so long, and who have done so much mischief to their own country as well as mine'—saying this to myself, and thinking, at the same time, of the dreadful menace of the Scotsman, and of that "national debt of revenge," that he said Scotland owed me; with my mind thus filled, I could not help crossing myself as I passed this celebrated bridge."

It did, indeed, require some courage in a veteran of seventy to come alone to the country he had so long ridiculed, and that in the face of all its "leading journals" yelping in chorus against him, and reciprocating abuse with those of England. The real power of the press is distinctly revealed at such times. That power is now, thank Heaven! only felt when allied with right. Cobbett's errors of forty years, raked up, and duly set forth, did him no injury with the people.

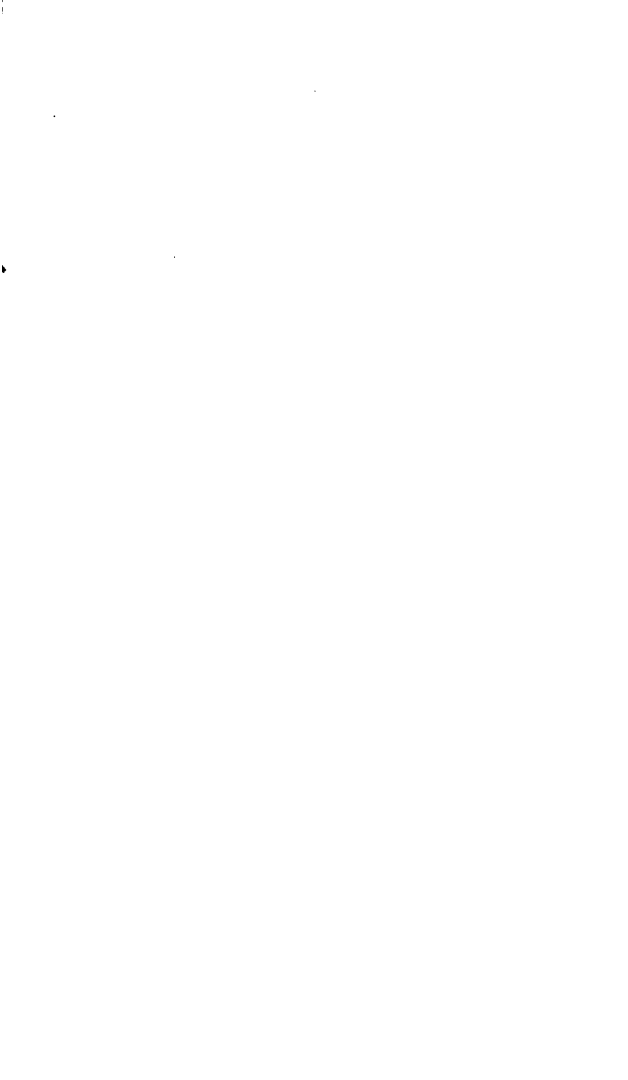
The scenery, the manners, the cattle, the crops, the gardens, the women, "the pretty girls," the little children, the pigs, and all those other natural objects for which he had so sharp an eye, that chanced to be immediately before him, are ever the finest, the best, the most beautiful that ever he had seen, or that were to be seen in the world! We can never believe that this is the temper of a harsh, cold, or savage man. It is this overflowing of kindly sympathies which makes much of Cobbett's miscellaneous writings so delightful; and this is the true source of much of his egotism, and, at any rate, of all that is amiable in it. Like Dr. Johnson, he had been abusing Scotland and the Scots all his life, from pure no-meaning, or a humorous spleen; and, like the great leviathan of literature, when he came, he was charmed with all he saw and heard in that country; nor was there the least insincerity or affectation in the one case more than in the other.

We now hasten to the conclusion of our task. That it has afforded us some gratification thus to have assisted in rescuing his name from the obloquy of interested parties, we cannot but confess. His errors and his virtues have been alike laid before our readers, and we now leave them to form that opinion of Cobbett's character which the facts we have brought forward may induce them to adopt. That the opinion thus formed of the illustrious deceased will be a favourable one, we cannot doubt. He has laboured long and arduously in the cause of mankind and surely we should not hesitate to award him that meed of praise that he so well merits at our hands.

THE END.

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